THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8 November, 1926 Number 11

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NOTES of the MONTH

The Miners' Decision—Margate Contrasts—Confessions of Impotence—General Election No Alternative—Disbelief in the Workers—The Future of the General Strike—Reformist Policy—Industrial Peace—What is Labour Party Policy?—The True Lesson of Breakdown — British Capitalist Crisis — Political Weakening—The Steel Pact—Miners' Opportunity—The Advance in China—International Solidarity —The Imperial Conference—The Scarborough Conference — The Miners Lead the Way.

THE decision of the October 7 Miners' Delegate Conference has transformed the situation. In the midst of confusion, doubt, hesitation, back-stabbing, and disastrous negotiation it has sounded again the clear call to resist and, instead of weakening, to intensify the struggle. Like the May 12 decision of the miners to go forward, it is the answer of the working class alike to the capitalist attack and to the betrayals of the yellow leaders. The decision this time is all the more noticeable in that it was reached without even the miners' own leaders, against their guidance and to their surprise : it was, in Cook's own words, a decision of " the rank and file without any guidance from the Executive." In other words, it was the voice of the working class sounding more clearly and distinctly than ever before, and showing once again how far the will of the working class is already in front of the whole existing leadership. This will, whatever the outcome of the immediate struggle, cannot be broken ; it is already the foretaste of the future revolutionary will which is destined to triumph over every obstacle. The spirit of the miners will inevitably spread to the other workers, as they find themselves faced with the same conditions. The struggle, which is to-day waged with such determination in the face of suffering and sacrifice to resist the capitalist attack, can only develop into the struggle, with even greater tenacity and steadfastness, to break the power of capitalism and establish the power of the working class.

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IN marked contrast was the spirit at the Margate Conference, where the Right Wing leadership who had broken the General Strike and abandoned the miners were in control. Here impotence, pessimism and disillusion were the order of the day. Absolute passivity was maintained and enforced in face of the workers' most desperate struggle. The miners' appeal for help was ruled out even to be placed before the Conference. The miners were assailed as blind fools, endangering "British civilisation," because they dared to resist a starvation wage. In place of paying any heed to the actual struggle of the miners for a living wage, in which struggle is gathered up the future of the working class, the Conference preferred, under the facile leadership of the Independent Labour Party—always ready to replace the real struggle by a paper scheme—to adopt a solemn resolution, in the best approved bureaucratic fashion, for an "inquiry" into the question of a living wage. No doubt, when the last of the workers are completely driven down under the capitalist low-wage stabilisation, with the assistance of the Labour Party and I.L.P. leaders pleading the necessity of recognising economic facts and the folly of resistance, the "scheme" resulting from the "inquiry" will be ready to be pigeon-holed.

"WE cannot overthrow capitalism." "In a resourceful, resilient industrial community like our own, we cannot subvert or overthrow, we must supersede, capitalism." This statement from the chairman's address was the keynote of the lead given at the Margate Conference. From this premise all else follows. From this follows the impossibility of struggle, the condemnation of the miners, the praise of industrial peace, the praise of the good employer, and the worship of the American Moloch as the model for Labour. The whole tactics, the whole propaganda, of the Labour Party is based upon the impregnability of capitalism.

> I know now, and many of my colleagues know now, that the May business did not assist the miners at all. . . . The General Strike failed because the resources of the country were—and are—stronger than the resources of the Trade Unions.

In this revealing sentence of the chairman of the Labour Party (writing in *Answers*) is expressed, not only the philosophy of the

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Right Wing, but also of those industrial "Left Wing" leaders who lived in easy phrases of industrial solidarity and power without facing for a moment the real conditions of conflict with the capitalist State, and who, therefore, after the first taste, are now in full retreat and blowing the trumpet of Parliamentarism to hide their retreat.

THE preaching of Parliamentarism as an alternative, which has now become fashionable with so many one-time revolutionaries, does not mean that Parliament is believed in as a means to Socialism. It only means that the power of the working class is not believed in. This, and not the hypothetical possibilities of Parliament, is the real crux. When the typical Labour Party leader says, "I refuse to help the miners, because I believe in the next general election," the part of his sentence that matters is not his opinion about the next general election, but his refusal to help the miners. If a sincere working-class fighter were still, let us suppose, in spite of everything to retain a lingering belief in the results of the next general election, to believe, that is to say, that a Government composed of MacDonald, Thomas, Clynes and Haldane would make a striking difference in the administration of affairs, it would never occur to him to make this a reason for not helping the miners; he would want *also* to help the miners. There is no doubt that the workers will take advantage of all the opportunities that are open to them at the next general election to strike a blow at the capitalists. But this makes no difference to the realities of the present struggle. The retreat of so many one-time "Left" leaders, as of the whole reformist leadership, to sole and unabashed Parliamentarism as the lesson of 1926 is not an advance in the working-class struggle, but a retreat from the working-class struggle.

IN point of fact, when the workers have declared aloud their impotence to overthrow the capitalists, the capitalists are not likely thereupon at once to present them with Socialism on a golden plate. On the contrary the capitalists would be very much more likely, if once they had satisfied themselves that these spokesmen really expressed the working class, to give a hearty laugh

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that they had ever let themselves get so anxious over nothing, and then to proceed equably with a few useful measures such as the strengthening of the Second Chamber and the reform of the trade union laws. But the argument from the impotence of the working class to overthrow the capitalists to the conclusion of Parliamentarism as the only weapon is exactly an argument of this type. And it is upon this conviction of the impotence of the working class that the whole philosophy of the Labour Party leadership is based, and the whole tactics follow that were presented at Margate. It is from this that follows their extreme hatred towards the Communists (so much so that a member of the Executive naïvely declared that the Executive spent half their time fighting the Communists), because the Communists still believe in the possibility of the working-class struggle, and, therefore, the workers are increasingly inclined to listen to them.

IT is important to note the treatment of the general strike at the Margate Conference, because the general strike is the turning point for the whole leadership, and the events of the general strike and the miners' struggle have forced into the open the whole policy of the reformist leadership more clearly than ever before, and compelled them to show themselves in their true colours as the full counterpart of German Social Democracy. "The Communist Party and Minority Movement still believe in the general strike. The Labour Party looks with confidence to the general election." Here, in this concluding passage of the chairman's address, the general strike is definitely and explicitly disclaimed. On the other hand, in the address of the chairman of the Trades Union Congress, the general strike was explicitly declared to be retained by the Labour Movement as a weapon for future use. It is true that the declaration was so hedged round with reservations and limitations that it was obvious the supposed retention of the weapon was intended to be a purely ornamental hanging up on the wall to point to in answer to awkward questions with a polite fiction of possible use. But the nominal opposition remains. The Labour leadership in one aspect declares the general strike is retained. The same Labour leadership in another aspect declares the general strike is abandoned. Which is it to be ?

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THIS question of the future of the general strike has got to be faced and answered by the reformist leadership, because it is the cardinal question on which the future of the Labour Movement turns. They cannot have it both ways : at one time using militant phrases about future general strikes, like the chairman of the General Council in America, at another time denouncing the whole conception as an invention of the Communist devil. If they mean general strikes, then they have got to prepare for them ; phrase-making is no use. To talk of general strikes and not to face the conditions of conflict with the capitalist State is to play with words and endeavour to fool the Movement a second time. On the other hand, if they do not mean general strikes and explicitly rule them out beforehand, in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty's Government and the lawyers, then they have to face the fact that all effective strike action and struggle under modern conditions, even for the most limited defensive purposes, is ruled out, all sympathetic action is ruled out, and all political strike action or war-resistance (as contemplated in the unanimous resolution of the Margate Conference) is also ruled out. There remains nothing but submission and hanging on the favour of the employers. It is the value of the Margate Labour Party Conference that this necessary consequence of Right Wing policy was even more clearly and shamelessly brought out than at the Trades Union Congress.

THE Margate Labour Party Conference showed the logical consequence of the policy of the Right Wing, of the policy of May 12. That consequence is and can only be submission all along the line, passivity in the face of attack, acceptance of the capitalist schemes of economic reconstruction at the expense of wages, and surrender in every actual struggle, always in the name of mythical future Parliamentary hopes. It was, therefore, not irrelevant or out of place that the chairman of the Conference should have concentrated attention on the aim of industrial peace. Industrial peace has no meaning in relation to the modern policy of capitalism or to the actual situation of the workers save as a policy of complete submission, lowering of

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standards and unconcealed treachery in face of renewed and intensified capitalist attack. The union of Havelock Wilson and the chairman of the Labour Party Conference in preaching industrial peace at the present moment is a sufficiently ugly sign of the trend of direction. Industrial peace is now established as the official policy of the reformist leadership, as in Germany, and as in America. This is the working out of May 12.

ON the eve of the Margate Conference the chairman of the Labour Party wrote in one of the Rothermere journals :—

> Our unions can do good work by discrediting the theory that each and every employer under heaven is an "enemy of the working classes." There are bad employers in this country as in every other country. But I have met many good ones in my time. A large proportion of the great industrial concerns of Britain are run under the best of Trade Union conditions, where everything possible is done for the workers, and where directors, overseers and managers have risen from the ranks. No progress is to be made along the lines of being suspicious of everybody and everything and stigmatising men as "enemies," some of whom are as honest and upright and anxious to do the right thing as we are ourselves.

If this kind of rubbish occurred in an Economic League pamphlet or a Primrose dame's oration, it would not be worth wasting time on. But when this kind of thing appears under the signature of the chairman of the Labour Party, it is necessary to ask what the Labour Party exists for, whether it has any aims or programme at all in relation to employers as a whole (apart from whether they are "good" or "bad"), and whether there is any discipline for its leadership and official representatives to stick to its programme. And it is necessary to ask the membership of the Labour Party, including the members of the Labour Party Executive : first, whether this kind of expression and policy represents their views ; second, if it does not represent their views, whether they are satisfied that it should go out uncorrected and widely circulated from the responsible leaders and official representatives of the Party (as is continually happening) ; and third, if they are not satisfied that it should so go out, what steps they propose to take about it.

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DOES the situation justify this complete passivity and pessimism of the future of the working-class struggle, which was the dominant note of Margate? On the contrary. Not only does the reality of the miners' struggle make an immediate duty and obligation, whatever the position; but more than that, the facts which lie behind the miners' struggle and of which it is the expression, the actual situation of capitalism to-day, should give the most tremendous impetus and energy to working-class attack now more than ever. The very facts of the breakdown of capitalism, which are made the basis of pleas of facing economic realities and accepting cuts in wages, should lead the whole Labour Movement to the exact opposite conclusion, to the necessity of pressing home the fight now more than ever, and, so far from accepting cuts in wages as an inevitable necessity, endeavouring instead to raise the fight to the revolutionary issues which are the sole answer to the so-called economic realities. The breakdown of capitalism in Britain has increased, and not diminished, with the events of the past few years and above all of the present year. But the reformist leadership, instead of recognising the position and drawing the revolutionary conclusion, have in growing panic at the situation forgotten all their Socialism and given themselves up to the illusory task of endeavouring to patch up capitalism, to the destruction and stagnation of the working-class struggle.

ECONOMICALLY the destruction of the whole foundations of British capitalism has gone further than ever. The falling national revenue, raising the prospect of a deficit, shows this; and still more so does the tremendous advance in the adverse balance of trade. The year 1925 had already reached an extreme record in this respect; but against the figure of 273 million pounds for the first nine months of last year, this year shows already 316 millions for the same period. If for 1925 it was only with extreme difficulty, and in the face of considerable scepticism, that the Board of Trade argued there still remained an extremely small surplus for new investment abroad (£28 millions against £63 millions in 1924 and £153 millions in 1925), how much more clear is it that there can only have been a reversal and actual stoppage and diminution of foreign investment in 1926, resulting

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at once in a weakening of the world position, reacting against exports and weakening the hold on the Empire. To the capitalist outlook all this is sufficiently explained in the crime of working-class resistance to the coal lock-out. But the coal dispute is itself only a link in the chain, although a very big one, and not a primary cause. In April, the month before the dispute, the adverse balance was at its highest record of any month for three years. The class struggle, resulting from the economic decline, has inevitably accelerated the decline. The effects of the coal stoppage on industry, and the failure of foreign coal to cope with more than a fraction of the loss, with the consequent growingly powerful position of the miners' united stand, despite the failure of action of the other workers, has been clearly shown in the Labour Research Department White Paper, which has been widely quoted. The loss of the general strike and coal dispute is varyingly estimated at three to five hundred millions. If before the dispute capitalist industry could not see its way to pay a living wage, how much less is it likely after these losses ; and therefore how much longer will the reformist leaders follow the wild-goose chase of endeavouring to find a compromise on wages acceptable to capitalism ?

POLITICALLY the weakening of the British bourgeoisie is no less obvious. The concentration of attention and forces on the home struggle has weakened and paralysed their action abroad, and the international situation during the past six months has registered a series of defeats for British capitalism. The Locarno scheme, in so far as it represented the aim of a European balance of power under British hegemony by the introduction of Germany as a counterweight to France, has suffered shipwreck because in the intervening period what has developed has been, in place of a hegemony of Britain over a balance of France and Germany, instead a bloc of France and Germany, both economic and political, with the point very visibly directed against Britain. The Steel Pact raises the prospect of a new Continental system, to enter which would be to admit defeat, and to remain outside raises problems of competition beyond the power of existing British organisation and conditions. It is characteristic of reformist blindness that they have hailed the Steel Pact as the beginning

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of the era of international capitalism, wiping out the old contradictions, instead of seeing it for what it is—a new power-grouping raising world antagonisms to the most intense degree : the beginning of European Continental consolidation outside the Soviet Union against America, with England uneasily poised between, and still endeavouring to build upon the shaking foundation of the Empire.

THE attempt to answer by the approach to the German business men is not likely to reach success, because the conditions preclude effective economic co-operation. Germany, in order to give effect to the existing stabilisation, which is still only maintained by successive new foreign loans and credits, will need to make a tremendous expansion of exports, in order to pay both the rising Dawes requirements and the accumulating interest on foreign loans (amounting already, according to the official figures, to 5,500 million marks since 1924). But at present there is still an excess of imports, which means that foreign indebtedness is still increasing, and payment has not yet in fact begun ; so that when this is to be reversed, and payment begun, the flood of new exports on the world market will have to be very great indeed. But British capitalism is equally faced with the necessity of a rapid expansion of exports as the condition of stabilisation ; and unless this is achieved the present artificial situation of high imports cannot be maintained, and the existing deceitful prosperity of certain home and luxury industries will fall alongside the export industries. Effective agreement in this situation cannot be reached, as there is no basis for such a productive union as there is in the Franco-German bloc. British capitalism, therefore, has no hesitation in rejecting the German overtures to come inside the bloc and be rationed, but knows at the same time that the taking up of competition in face of the modern organised French and German industry can only be attempted on the basis of driving down the workers.

BUT it is just here that the protracted continuance of the coal struggle, wholly unexpected to the bourgeoisie, who had thought first that they had had it finished in May when they had settled the General Council, and then again that

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they had got it finished in July when they had got the Bishops to draw the miners' leaders away from the slogan, and then again that they had got it finished in September when they had set the Churchill-MacDonald trap and the Executive had walked in, but every time they were defeated by the working class, by the miners themselves—it is just this that has upset all their plans. Their plans necessitated the reduction of the miners' wages as the preliminary to the reduction of other wages. It is not a question of the "pig-headed backwardness" of the coalowners, as the reformists still try to imagine in order to hide the real character of the class struggle. The coalowners could never have held out so long if they had not had the banks and the Government—that is, the organised power of capitalism—behind them. The cost of the struggle already far exceeds the total capital value of the mines, thus clearly showing the political character of the struggle of capitalism as a whole, led by the Government against the working class. But the continuance of the struggle leads now to a desperately serious situation, because it has facilitated the formation of the Franco-German bloc which it was intended to fight, leaves open to it the unchecked invasion of markets, and at the same time by the enforced dependence on the increasingly limited available foreign coal throws British capitalism into a dependent position just when the maximum freedom of action is needed to meet the new international situation. And for this reason the miners can feel the more confident in the correctness of their decision to make every effort to hold out still and to intensify the struggle when the pressure of forces makes it likely that the Government will be compelled to abandon its waiting attitude and endeavour to bring the struggle rapidly to an end.

THE anti-Soviet offensive, which was an integral part of the Locarno foreign policy and the programme of the Baldwin Government, has hung fire because of the contradictions of the European States it was endeavoured to combine, although the drawing of Germany into the League and the establishment of control of Poland through the Pilsudski coup constitute partial successes which still hold dangerous possibilities. The attempted Baltic bloc has broken down in face of the Soviet

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neutrality advances, and the Soviet-Lithuanian Treaty marks its failure. Most important of all, in China British capitalism has received its heaviest setback in the world situation. The advance of the national revolutionary forces raises for the first time the visible hope of a united, nationally free China, bringing the development of four hundred millions outside the orbit of imperialism to stand side by side with the one hundred and forty millions of the Soviet Union (forming together one-third of the human race) and raising incalculable reactions throughout Asia. The British schemes and propositions of large-scale armed intervention have so far foundered repeatedly on the rock of the antagonisms of the principal Powers concerned, Japan showing signs at present of aiming at the role of the Asiatic Power and leader in distinction from British militarism, and the United States tranquilly looking on at the decline of the hitherto dominant British interests in China, and on the basis of its superior industrial strength pursuing the role of peaceful penetration under the familiar flag of freedom of trade and sympathy to national aspirations.

THIS situation in China may change. The very success of the national revolutionary forces may combine the Powers in an attempt at united material and armed intervention, as before in Russia. It is necessary to be on guard against this. But up to the present the limited action of the British has been ineffective ; the murderous excesses of the gunboats and naval squadron have not been able to change the political position save to stimulate the national enthusiasm ; while the generals successively bribed by British pay have broken down repeatedly through the passing over of their troops and the hostility of the population. The ground already won makes certain the eventual success of the Chinese national struggle, however hard the battles in front. The miners and the Kuomintang can look to one another with pride as allies in a common fight well fought. The sympathy and readiness of the workers in Britain can help to safeguard the rapid advance of the Chinese anti-imperialist struggle without the disaster of a ruinous and barbarous interventionist war, the danger of which is still great. But how can this readiness find expression ? Not through the Margate method of submission, of waiting for the

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next election two years after the intervention is over (like waiting for the miners to be starved) ; but only through the method of class struggle, through the class strength of the workers, the way that the miners have shown. The success of Canton to win equal rights for the Chinese (so much so that the Labour Party has had to send greetings to the Kuomintang, in which body the Communists are freely enrolled as a party), where all the Peking diplomacy has accomplished nothing, shows once again the same lesson, the lesson of the only language that the imperialists and bourgeoisie pay heed to—the language of mass-strength and action.

FORCED to give ground in Europe and in China, the British bourgeoisie look increasingly to the Empire as a means of rebuilding their position. But here also the same causes which weaken their situation at home and internationally weaken also their hold upon the Empire. The Imperial Conference throws into relief the problem of the white Dominions — the white garrisons of twenty millions, or one-eightieth of the world's population who have seized one-seventh of the world's surface and now endeavour to hold it in their own exclusive right against the overcrowded rest of the world. Between these and the home bourgeoisie, by the inexorable process of capitalist development, increasing division now arises. The ties which still hold them to the home bourgeoisie are partly financial and partly strategic. The bulk of investments and new supply of capital has been almost exclusively a British monopoly in the past, resulting in annual tribute and a lion's share of their trade for Britain ; while their defence has been maintained by their powerful protector's Navy, to the cost of which their contributions have been extremely small. But both these functions now weaken with the weakening position of Britain. The supply of capital is no longer abundant to meet their needs ; for six months the maintenance of the gold standard made necessary even an embargo on colonial loans, and Britain had to agree to their going to the stronger American money market. In the same way the British Navy since Washington has had to abandon its supremacy and admit the equality of the American Navy. Thus a more powerful protector is in view. In Canada American penetration has already outstripped the old British hold,

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while the strategic argument is all in favour of America ; the Governor Byng election and return of Mackenzie King, openly acclaimed by the Wall Street Press as their candidate, has underlined this. South Africa, with the large subject population four-fifths of the whole and awakening Africa in the background, is still dependent ; but the return of Hertzog shows the tendency. Alone Australia and New Zealand, wholly dependent on the British Navy for maintenance in the vast territories they can neither occupy themselves nor protect by their own strength against the overcrowded millions of Asia, remain fully " loyal " ; but even here the tumultuous reception to the visit of the American Navy shows the new possibilities. All these changing relations reflect themselves in the ever-changing web of diplomatic fictions under which the British bourgeoisie try to conceal their weakening grip.

FINALLY, at home the continued weakening of the Liberal Party, the party of ascendant capitalism, and the strengthening of Right Wing Conservatism, the party of extreme class war in the capitalist decline, is the obvious character of the present period. The final resignation of the last Liberal leader does not, indeed, affect in any way, but serves to accentuate, the actual situation, and it is significant that the last foundering of the old Liberal Party should have happened directly and without concealment on the rock of the general strike—that is, of the class-war. The Liberal Party breaks in two : the Right Wing goes home to Conservatism, registering the passing over of capitalism from advance to decline ; the Left Wing is only able to continue to exist as a manoeuvring distracting element on the edge of Labour. It is true that the Labour Right Wing and the Liberal remnant are endeavouring and will endeavour to revive Liberalism in the coming period and may even form a Government ; but the revival is entirely without roots in the period of capitalist decline, can only endeavour to build itself unsteadily upon the basis of the working-class movement, and is therefore completely unstable. The real trend of the bourgeoisie is shown unmistakably in the Scarborough Conference, where the thin veneer of politeness and pseudo-culture disappears at once as soon as their possessions are threatened, and the cave psychology of panic brutality comes out, showing

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the consciousness of their weakness. The remove of England from civil war and white terror is already extremely thin ; and if the working-class movement does not awaken to the position and prepare for it in time, the awakening will come under very much more unfavourable conditions.

WHAT is the conclusion of this survey of the situation ? Of the two conferences, the Margate Conference of the Labour Party and the Miners' Delegate Conference of October 7, which has shown the truer way forward for the working class in actual relation to existing conditions and tendencies ? There can be no question of the answer. The way of Margate is the way that the Baldwin Government, the constitutionalists, the lawyers, the bankers, the business men and the capitalist Press want the Labour Movement to go : the way of submission, the way of recognising economic (capitalist economic) realities, the way of reductions of wages and of stabilisation, the way of moderate constitutionalism and patriotic imperialism, the way of industrial peace and sectional division, all under a nimbus of rosy Parliamentary illusions. The way of the miners offers no rosy illusions ; it is a way of very hard struggle and sacrifice ; but it is a way that does fight the capitalist attack, that does fight the whole policy of stabilisation on the backs of the workers, that does raise the open and unconcealed anger and opposition of the whole capitalist class, and that does offer the real way forward for the united working class. Where does the way of Margate lead ? It leads to lower wages and longer hours, to poverty without recovery, for the stabilisation on the basis of capitalism can only be illusory and intensify every economic problem, to intensified international competition and the certainty of war. The way of the miners leads, through hard and difficult present struggle, through heavy privation, but privation in the cause of the struggle and not for the salvation of the profiteers, to the real fight against capitalism, to the unification of the working class at home and internationally, to the conquest of power, to the realisation of Socialism, to the real solution of the problems and hardships of the present epoch. There can be no question which way the working class will choose.

R. P. D.

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FORWARD TO VICTORY

By ARTHUR HORNER

THE Mining dispute is still the central fact in the economic life of Great Britain. Notwithstanding all the manoeuvres, well intentioned and otherwise, that have taken place, the problem remains unsolved and apparently insoluble. For twenty-six weeks the basic industry of these islands has stood still, affecting in its passivity every phase of the country's economic existence. If we turn to the Coal Commission Report (page 3) we find the following summary of the tremendous part which coal production plays in Great Britain :—

> The paramount importance of the coal mining industry in the economic and social life of this country is a commonplace, and it is unnecessary for us to dwell upon it. With the exception of agriculture, to which it is a close second, the industry employs more men than any other : not less than one-twelfth of our population is directly dependent upon it. It is the foundation of our iron and steel, ship-building and engineering trades, and indeed of our whole industrial life. The value of its product is in the neighbourhood of £250,000,000 a year. It provides one-tenth of our exports in value, and about four-fifths of them in volume. By furnishing outward cargo for a large amount of shipping, it cheapens freights for the imports on which we all depend for our vital needs.

This quotation makes clear the extent of the casualties that must have been sustained by all departments of capitalist production. The coal mining industry and many other industries also are now employing relatively very few men, and all industries dependent on coal are falling under a creeping paralysis. During the months from May to August, coal to the value of £12,663,115 has been imported, whilst none has been exported. Ships are leaving the country loaded with costly ballast, to return with the food, &c., we all need, paying increased freightage charges in the process.

Despite, however, the awful cost of its continuance, the lock-out of the miners is still maintained, and whilst capitalism in general groans under the burden of its class obligations, it is careful not to complain openly against the coalowners, lest by so doing a class weakness is demonstrated. At the same time British capitalists are

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conscious that, if only the miners can be defeated outright, there is every reason to believe that the attacks which are prepared against their own workers will result in victory. Rightly or wrongly the miners are regarded by the whole of capitalist forces in this country as the shock troops of the British working class, and this battle is looked upon in every phase of capitalist production as the first onslaught of a general attack, to be followed, if successful, by a series of further onslaughts on a much wider front. Only thus can be explained the mutual forbearance and sacrifice inside the ranks of the whole capitalist class, only by this means is it possible to explain how a large number of mutually antagonistic and destructive elements can find common ground in support of a single section. Increased taxation due to unemployment, exorbitant prices for inferior fuel and other commodities, expensive plant lying idle and depreciating rapidly in value, the balance of trade upset for years, the increased tempo towards collapse, all these matter nothing so long as the coalowners emerge victorious from the struggle which they have entered upon as the representatives of capitalism as a whole.

The miners, face to face with such well-directed centralised opposition, have suffered tremendously from the conflict. Semi-starvation, E.P.A., and threats of ejection from their homes, all these have left their mark on these glorious working-class fighters. Undaunted, they have been proudly conscious of the representative character of the part they were called upon to play. Nevertheless, right from the beginning, opposition has been shown by the officials of the other working-class organisations, whose members the miners were also defending in the course of their own struggle. Even during the nine days of the General Strike the activities of the General Council were centred on finding a way out through the sacrifice of the miners' standard of living, rather than upon forcing a way to victory by securing sacrifices from the enemy.

Since then, cowardice has reached its logical next step, which is treachery. Those who find all sorts of constitutional barriers to justify their refusal to enforce a levy, have not hesitated to overthrow the elementary principles of Trade Unionism by handling coal produced by blacklegs at home and abroad. The workers in

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the transport industry would have more willingly agreed to give money to assist the miners to victory than to have assisted the coalowners by enabling them to prolong the stoppage, which to so large an extent aggravates their own miserable economic conditions. At the Margate Conference, Thomas pointed to the 200,000 railwaymen on short time and the 40,000 railwaymen unemployed as a reason for inability to help the miners. The facts he adduces are not an argument for refusing assistance but provide the most imperative reason why the railwaymen should throw their whole weight into the struggle on behalf of the miners. Neither the railwaymen nor the transport workers have been given the opportunity to say yea or nay. The agreements made after the Strike, condemning the railway and transport workers to turn cannibals, to steal their bread off the miners' tables, were made without consent or even consultation with the workers affected. The question of whether or not they are prepared to pay a levy is rigorously kept away from them. Wherever the opportunity has been given to the workers to ballot, the levy has been forthcoming, as in the case of the A.S.W. and the Postal Workers. Bournemouth and Margate will stand out as the places where the workers were forced into disgrace, through false and treacherous leadership.

This situation outside the miners' ranks has had its natural corollary within them. When treachery becomes common then it ceases to appear a crime. If Thomas and the rest can live in honour and glory, what is there to prevent Spencer, Hodges, &c., attempting to imitate them with the same prospects of capitalist flattery as reward? "Like clings to like," and the internal betrayers only required the encouragement of the apparent success of their bigger brothers outside to reveal themselves in their true characters. The M.F.G.B. officials have been aware of the danger from the beginning, but until now have taken no effective steps to combat it. The immunity from attack secured by the General Council after the General Strike, mainly possible because of the action of the M.F.G.B. in entering into a bargain for the hushing up of treachery, must have given these people grounds for anticipating similarly generous treatment for themselves. If Thomas, Bromley, &c., had been called to the bar and exposed before the whole working class they would have received the retribution they

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deserved, and Spencer, &c., would have held off in fear of similar exposure and punishment—for traitors are always cowards.

The General Council's report, which is really an open attack upon the miners, is quoted in every part of the minefields, particularly in the Black areas. The miners' failure to reply allows their case to go by default and this slanderous document to pass for truth. The miners' only hope after the collapse of the General Strike was to secure a change of working-class leadership, and this could only have been brought about by an exposure of the attitude and actions of these leaders during and after the struggle. By providing a shield for treachery, the M.F.G.B. contributed to their own isolation, and encouraged potential traitors inside to go and do likewise.

The miners have literally folded their arms and turned the other cheek to each succeeding blow. They have observed the Law and conformed to rules and Union constitutions in face of the most violent attacks by the State, and callous use of constitutional Trade Union discipline to suppress the eagerness of the rank and file to come to the miners' assistance. Internally, though reaction plotted its downfall, the M.F.G.B. has religiously refrained from interfering in the affairs of any district, for although from the outside it may appear that the M.F.G.B. is all powerful, it is, in fact, only a combination of voluntarily affiliated autonomous bodies, which may withdraw from association at any time. The only means by which victory could have been achieved in these circumstances was through the depositing of all power in the central body, and the direct appeal to the rank and file of the other Unions, together with the careful discussion of plans to counter the effects of laws passed to safeguard the coalowners and to destroy the Miners' Federation. Month after month passed and none of these things were done, and as is always bound to be the case where action is face to face with inaction, action has the advantage.

Numberless endeavours there have been to find a way out of the dilemma. The present deadlock can never be attributed to lack of willingness to negotiate, or to lack of variety in means of approach. All methods have been tried : first to accept a reduction in wages, then to agree to accept a National Agreement which would not contain a national minimum percentage, which is the outstanding

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attribute of any such agreement ; finally not to place a bar to a discussion on the question of longer hours, and even to accept compulsory arbitration with the Coal Commission's Report as terms of reference. The church leaders, politicians of every party, except the Communist Party, ex-coal-commissioners, in fact every section from Trade Union leaders to Prime Ministers have been given the job of go-betweens, and all have been incapable of finding a solution to the conundrum ; which, simply stated, is " How can capitalism be retained whilst permitting the workers even a minimum of decent conditions of existence ? " The truth is that there is no answer possible. Capitalism or comfort, one may choose between them, but to secure the penny and the bun is impossible.

The miners' task, by this statement of the position, may not appear less difficult of accomplishment, but it is certainly more simple to understand. If economic conditions under capitalism will not permit the retention of any of the conditions that the miners have fought and suffered to maintain, then the task before us is to work for the overthrow of the system, as the only means of realising our objectives. How ? MacDonald and Williams suggested at Margate that the miners should go back on any terms and await the coming of a Labour Government. The question, they said, is purely political.

What a joke this is to try to play upon men who have fought for twenty-six weeks against the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracy allied with the most ruthless capitalist Government of recent times. Wait, for how long ? Even when the Labour Government comes, it will not stand for revolution, and failing that, the harsh economic facts will remain unchanged, and therefore they will be no nearer to a solution.

If not back to work, what other course is there ? The centre section says, fold arms and wait until something happens. It is a terrible risk to take. Nothing can come for our advantage unless we go and fetch it. If we remain passive the enemy does not. Every weak spot is a place where the opponent can display his relative strength. Bribes, threats, starvation, suppression by the State forces, treachery inside, and false friends without, all these combined will destroy us if we merely watch and wait. There is

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only one way now to victory, and that lies forward. The men have said that they agree with this course, whatever the consequences to themselves. This struggle has never been one to discover the section which is ethically right, it has from the beginning been one to discover which possessed the most might. Great power lies to our hand, if we will but use it.

The first step must be to concentrate all power in the hands of the M.F.G.B. Men like Spencer must be prevented from doing further damage, for no section of the organisation can give way without injuring the whole. The E.C. must be told that the power is given them to use and not to hold in passivity. Every weak section of the front must have reserves rushed up to fill the gaps already made, and to prevent further breaches. No further assistance must be rendered to the mineowners by the safeguarding of the pits from fire or water. Sections may suffer afterwards in consequence of this drastic step, but unless we win this struggle we will all go down into terrible poverty for a long time to come.

The rank and file of the Unions must be directly approached with a request to refuse to handle Black Coal, and those remaining at work to agree to levy themselves in the branches for all affected by refusing to blackleg, and for the miners' dependants. What is needed now is courage. Courage now, in face of a clear realisation of the nature and size of the task, can win not only for the miners but for all workers. Will the miners' leaders now at last give up their attitude of passivity, and face the struggle as they would face War? For this is war of the most brutal kind, and women and children are its victims.

It may be argued that it is now too late; if so, the delay can in no wise be attributed to the rank and file, for they have repeatedly urged this course for months, and it is only the complete bankruptcy of negotiatory tactics which has permitted them at last to secure acceptance for their policy. It is not too late to fight even now, in view of the terrible alternatives. The break-up of the Federation as far as all future effective work is concerned, that is the alternative to a struggle of a more intensive character. The owners demand that we hand over our weapon of struggle. They will only allow a return to work if we abandon all our means of recovery from the blows they intend to deal us now. To surrender will

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enable capitalism to discover new strength for the eking out of its miserable existence, and while it continues to exist, progressively worsening conditions of living are bound to be the workers' lot in every industry.

The result of the Districts' vote on the South Wales proposals for intensifying the struggle has come late, but better late than never.

On August 16, at the M.F.G.B. Conference held in London, these intensification proposals were advocated and rejected in favour of giving plenary powers to the Executive Council to make an offer of wage reductions. Again, on two later occasions since, the same proposals have been put forward and rejected without reference to the opinions of the rank and file of the miners. However, a phase of the struggle has been reached when retreat in order is no longer possible, to surrender now involves a complete rout ; there is only one pathway out of the dilemma and that lies forward. It is only possible to go forward if the miners can hew their way through governmental regulations and Union constitutions. Both are at present in the hands of enemies who utilise the machinery for the purpose of defeating the miners. The men in the black areas must be appealed to in spite of the sabotage of reactionary miners' officials in these districts who have given qualified support to the breakaways, though in certain districts it should be said the officials have remained loyal and worked heroically in an endeavour to stop the rout. That this course holds out possibilities of success will be seen from the results of the Nottinghamshire vote, which is largely the direct result of the efforts of A. J. Cook and others who have entered that coalfield. In just the same fashion the workers in the transport industries must be asked to refuse to handle black coal, in spite of the barriers set up by bureaucracy in these organisations. *The miners must appeal to loyalty over the heads of disloyalty.* Moreover, a levy must be got, even if we have to go to each individual district or union branch to secure it. The M.F.G.B., too, must not defy the district vote by refusing to call out Safety Men. Delay in prosecuting the full policy expressed in the resolution is weakness of a most dangerous character. If the officials cannot honestly carry out their instructions they should say so in order that the workers may decide upon the

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next steps. The approach to Shirkey is foredoomed to failure, and the M.F.G.B. Executive know it. His policy is already well known to be that of an ally of the coalowners. He has declared his readiness to organise a blackleg safety service. The M.F.G.B. Executive in interviewing Shirkey is simply shirking the issue in the hope that the delay thus secured will give time for something to turn up which will make the application of the policy unnecessary. The workers of the minefields must inform the Executive in no uncertain manner that when they say they desire a withdrawal of safety men they mean it. False sentiment now is criminal in face of the ruthless punishment and starvation which is being enforced upon the workers. Steps must be taken which will cause the greatest possible damage to the resources of the enemy. This is the only method by which they can be brought to their knees. We have reached a stage when we cannot retreat, and when the only pathway to victory lies over the dead body of a murderous and discredited system.

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FROM LIVERPOOL TO MARGATE

The Labour Party Conferences

By Dr. ROBERT DUNSTAN
(*Communist Candidate for West Birmingham*)

CALCULATING politicians consciously reckon on the short-lived memories of their followers, and so it is well to step back to the Liverpool Conference of 1925 and to jog the minds of the far too placid and trustful rank and file of the Labour Party. " Liverpool " will always stand out in the history of the working-class movement of this country, for there the Liberalising Right Wing of the Party aimed what they hoped would be their final blow at the Communist section of the Movement. The Communists were to be thrown out of the Party bag and baggage, not because they were not Socialists or that they intrigued with the open enemies of the workers, but as a goodwill offering to the well-to-do elements of the Labour Party and as a sop to the sentiments and voting strength of the middle classes. At all costs these had to be appeased, and so the most active and virile part of the Movement was excommunicated to improve the electoral chances of Labour politicians seeking office, pelf and place.

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

It is recorded that Mr. James Ramsay MacDonald dominated the Conference, and he received as a part of his reward the tumultuous applause of the capitalist Press. This " wise statesman," lean and hungry for office, learned in the stratagems of political leadership, attained his ends by fraudulently lifting from the Thesis of the Third International a short passage, tearing it from its context and falsely charging the Communists with advocating " heavy civil war." This wolf in sheep's clothing was the man of peace and high ideals, and his credulous followers were easily duped by this outstanding charlatan, who when in office did not hesitate to threaten the Egyptians, coerce the Indian workers, build aero-

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planes and cruisers and to send a British gunboat to aid the master class of Canton against the workers of that Eastern city. Yet in the face of this damning record this right honourable gentleman had the barefaced audacity to decry the use of force and by artfulness to falsify the position of the Communists in order that he might with more security play the part of "the lackey of capitalism" within the Labour Movement.

Machiavellian Tactics

In this game he was well supported by Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Secretary of the Party, and there is no better illustration of the smart methods of the Right Wing than this gentleman's action over the Communist resolution adopted by the Conference. When this was under discussion some prominent trade union delegates pointed out that the right of trade unions to select any of their members might be interfered with. Up gets the suave Mr. Henderson to protest that this was not so, saying :—

> This resolution excludes no one. What they were doing was appealing to them . . . when electing delegates to National or local Labour Party Conferences to refrain from something—

this something being not to select Communists, otherwise entitled, to represent their organisations at any Party conference. This crafty dodge would have aroused the envy of Machiavelli himself. For the object of this foxy Henderson manoeuvre was to secure the acceptance of the resolution and to leave its application to the officials of Eccleston Square; and did not the great teacher of subtlety write that :—

> The Prince should not be bound by his promise after the object for which it was given had been attained ?—(*The Prince*, ch. xviii.)

It is true that this convenient advice was given to ruling princes, but it can be followed by political rulers with advantage, and Mr. Henderson, having obtained his objective with true Machiavellian cunning, cast the promise aside and aided by his officials proceeded, without authority, to strain and enlarge the scope of the resolution so as to exclude Communist delegates and to disaffiliate Labour parties which refused to split the unity of the Movement. It is not too much to say that this action is the greatest piece of sharp practice which these past-masters in the art of trickery have achieved.

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The Tory-Lib.-Lab. Party

Apart from the exclusion of the Communists the main feature of the Liverpool Conference was the blind acceptance by the delegates of the official policy tabled in a series of resolutions, entitled "A Co-ordinated Policy of National Reconstruction and Reform." A high-sounding title no doubt ; and "how they loved these grandiloquent words,"[1] which covered so effectively the Liberalisation of the Party programme ! "Reconstruction and Reform": compare this with the old programme of 1918, "Labour and the New Social Order," which, however timid, was at least an expression of Socialist endeavour and did challenge the capitalist order of society. In the comparison is to be seen the retreat of the Labour Party, marching with bands and banners, led by untrustworthy leaders, to align itself with the "democratic" Tories and Liberal defenders of the old order. If this be doubted, consider what Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, the ex-editor of the *Daily Herald*, a man of keen insight and one who has reason to rue the strength and influence of the Communist Party, predicted in an interview granted to a widely read capitalist paper, in which he said :—

> . . . within the next twenty years there will be two parties only and two new ones. Conservatism—that is, the old Tory Party—will disappear. The two parties of the future, as I see them, will be a party that will consist of *a large portion of the present Labour Party, the Liberal Party and a certain number of the young open-minded Tories. The other Party will be the COMMUNISTS.*—(The *Star.*)

Here is the acme of MacDonaldism and a warning of the end of the present Labour Party if it continues under the leadership of its Right Wing reformist politicians.

An Ass in a Lion's Skin

It is clear that the resolutions adopted by the Liverpool Conference can only be likened to the manifestoes and slogans of the old Liberal Party, crying "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform," veneered, to make them sightly to shallow-minded Socialists, with a few catch phrases culled from the Socialistic teachings of the past.

Alas, the Labour Party came from Liverpool an ass decked out in a lion's skin, but the brayings of its leaders showed too clearly

[1] Mr. MacDonald's sneer at the Thesis of the Third International.

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its asinine qualities, and its official antics in and out of Parliament, varied at times by rumblings from the nether end, were only capable making the hyaenas of capitalism split their sides with laughter.

The Road to Ruin

There is no need to dwell at length on the stirring but unhappy history of the twelve months from Liverpool to Margate. After the reactionary victory at the 1925 Conference, the Government and the master class knew that they had nothing to fear from the Labour leaders, and that they could turn their attention to crushing the trade union movement, which was prepared to stand behind the miners in their struggle. The Communist Party was at once attacked, its leaders arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned for sedition, the main charge being based on the bold call of the Party to the armed forces of the Crown not to shoot down the workers in case of industrial strife. The Cabinet knew that in the event of a mining lock-out and a general strike that they would, in spite of the O.M.S. and other blacklegging organisations, have to rely upon the use of armed force to overawe the masses and defeat the rebellious workers. The courageous challenge of the Communists aimed a blow at the very base of their strength, and so they at once attacked the only part of the Labour Movement that had the intelligence and boldness to call upon all workers, in and out of the army, to act together and support one another.

Against this and other moves of the Government to anticipate the coming of the industrial crisis the leadership of the Labour Party did nothing. The reformist leaders, both of the Party and of the trade unions, failed to make any serious preparation ; they merely sat tight and hoped against hope that their failure would not be exposed and that the Cabinet would again climb down and buy off the trouble by continuing the subsidy to the mining industry.

Mr. Baldwin and his Ministers were, however, well aware of the weakness and incapacity of the leadership of the workers, and they challenged the issue in May, 1926. Whilst the rank and file responded to the call of their reluctant and irresolute leaders no real fight was put up in or out of Parliament against the capitalist offensive. Messrs. MacDonald and Thomas held the field, and far

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from leading they did all they could to limit the force of the industrial blow of the workers. They sabotaged the fight and entered into secret intrigues and negotiations with the capitalist politicians, and finally, much to their own satisfaction, they effected a complete surrender and callously left the miners to their fate. In this treacherous action they have never been repudiated by the Labour Party, and though there has been much private criticism and here and there a vague stirring of the back-benchers there has been no open denunciation or condemnation of their conduct, and in the face of the events at the Liverpool Conference no more than this blind acquiescence could have been expected. The road from Liverpool led direct to the shameful surrender at Eccleston Square. And so to Margate.

The Renegade

The Margate Conference: what does it mean for the Labour Movement? The chairman, Mr. Robert Williams, gave the answer to this question, as far as the Right Wing official leadership is concerned, by his defeatist speech, but the well-organised and effective fight put up by the Left Wing and Communist delegates, ruthlessly voted down as they were by the machine, raises a real hope that the Labour Party may yet be saved from MacDonaldism.

The chairman's speech should be read in conjunction with his article published in that intellectual journal appropriately enough called—*Answers*. Throughout the voice was the voice of Williams, but the words were the words of MacDonald. The revolutionary, who a few years ago wanted to plant the Red Flag on Buckingham Palace and displayed in the Albert Hall with self-appraisement the Red Star order of the Russian revolution, has now ratted and become a renegade. He now declares that " the Labour Party is a Constitutional Party," and after stating, no doubt with truth, that he wished he could " forget all about the General Strike " said that the " Labour Party do not think that the way to prepare the way to industrial or international peace is to prepare for war." Can he have forgotten that his leader, of whom he now says, " I am one of those who think it will be a good day for the people of this land when Ramsay MacDonald and a Labour Cabinet will be back in office," was responsible for making preparation for industrial

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and international war when he built the death-dealing cruisers and increased the air forces of this country ? When will the delegates to a Labour Conference recognise the humbug and hypocrisy of their leaders ?

No doubt Mr. Williams would like to forget the strike and the miners—he has an uneasy conscience, for his and his leader's conduct will not bear examination—but he might have spared the miners his insulting reference to their heroic struggle, and his insults should never be forgotten or forgiven. Listen to the apostate saying :—

> They (the miners) may be likened to the sightless Samson feeling for the grip of the pillars of the temple, the crashing of which may engulf this thing we call British civilisation.

Mr. Williams may now defend the Constitution and praise British " civilisation " to his heart's content, but he could have better applied his biblical knowledge and likened the Labour Movement under its present leadership to Samson dallying with the harlot Delilah of the capitalist Philistines, and so losing his strength, his sight and his, till then, successful struggle with his enemies.

The Seeker after Office

This speech of Mr. Williams, so much admired by the Philistine Press, gave the line to the whole Conference as far as the all-powerful platform was concerned. It is clear that Mr. MacDonald is preparing again to take office without an independent majority in the House of Commons, and to rely upon the assistance of the Liberals and any " open-minded young Tories " who may join his standard. This plan of his is in no way precluded by the so-called pledge, given under pressure, that there should be " no coalition," and we are faced with the prospect of another MacDonald Government and a policy of " continuity " in the affairs of the Empire and in the administration of the capitalist system at home. There is at least this satisfaction in the outlook: that another term of " Labour " Government such as we had in 1924 will open the eyes of the workers and cure them once and for all of any belief in their present leaders. To gain and continue in

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office Mr. MacDonald must keep himself free from becoming entangled in any policy likely to bring him into serious conflict with the Liberals, and so he poured scorn upon the I.L.P. resolution for "Socialism in our time," describing it as "political jerry-building of a high order," but he graciously said he had no objection to an inquiry as long as it did not interfere with more important work, and he knows how easily an inquiry can be manipulated by the astute party bosses. And, be it noted, Mr. MacDonald occupied his seat at the Conference as a delegate of the I.L.P.

The Steam-Roller

After the defeatist speech of the chairman, so unedifying in its nature that even the *Daily Herald* was moved to protest, the Conference settled down to be ironed flat by the block-vote steam-roller driven by MacDonald and the Party's officials. It took five days to complete the job, and at the end the surface was almost as flat as could be desired. Down and under went the attempt to secure unity by the re-admission of the Communists, a small bump is visible where the roller went over the opposition to the insulting and useless mining resolution, an unsightly crease marks the place of birth control upon the surface, and a crack or so appeared through one of which Mr. Ponsonby dropped his highly inconvenient resolution on the manufacture of armaments. The Left Wing opposition, ably led, had never a chance, and in spite of the undoubted superiority in debate the machine regularly and ruthlessly registered the massed block-vote of the Right Wing nuclei. In the election of the new Executive there was, however, a bad break—for the worms turned, looked up, and refused to have Mr. Robert Williams at any price, and so he was made to swallow the bitter and by no means tonic pill of his rejection.

Votes! Votes! Give us Votes!

The whole philosophy of the present managers of the Party is well summed up in the concluding words of Mr. Williams in *Answers*, where he writes :—

> When I was asked . . . the other day by a well-known man whose sympathies are with Labour what it was that the political Labour Movement in this country most required, I answered in one

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> word—"Votes." And we both laughed. But I had to admit that the only way was to decide upon policies and methods which would win votes.

Principles be blowed! we want votes. Where are they, and what can we offer for them so that my lord and master MacDonald may again be Premier? This is the true interpretation of the above-quoted passage. The Liberalised policy adopted at Liverpool last year was directed to this end and now we have added this year the new "Labour land policy."

There was no pretence made at Margate that this policy was devised with any other object than the securing of votes in the county divisions. Landlords, farmers, and labourers are to be appealed to to support the Labour land scheme, seeing that it compensates the landed interests at an unknown but substantial figure, promises the farmers that they "need fear nothing from the change," and weeps over the evil condition of the land workers without offering any substantial relief. This policy has been lifted bodily from Mr. Lloyd George's *Green Book*, and where it differs the alteration is by no means to the credit of those responsible for this weak and mean programme. The so-called land policy merely puts the crowning stone into the Liverpool programme of "National Reconstruction and Reform," and shows clearly that the Labour Party has abandoned its Socialist teachings and is prepared to buy off the class war and surrender to the enemy.

The "Red Flag"

The Margate Conference ended in a significant way. The chairman, after a tearful reference to his defeat, called, according to plan, for "Auld Lang Syne" lest worse befel, and this was sung, Mr. MacDonald adding his tuneful voice to the performance; then from the body of the hall came the strains of the "Red Flag," and this was taken up generally by the Conference, but Mr. MacDonald stood mute and mum. He would no doubt have sung the loyal and Constitutional anthem "God Save the King," but on no account the English revolutionary hymn.

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PHARAOH IN DOWNING STREET

By W. N. EWER

PHARAOH, as Lincoln Steffens rightly insists in *Moses in Red*, was an essential factor—as essential as Moses himself—in the making of the Jewish Revolution and of the Jewish nation.

The Jews do not to-day, as they should, recognise the Egyptian king as one of their national heroes. The Christian Church does not pay due homage to Judas—without whom there had been no Crucifixion and so, presumably, no Salvation of the World. Even the Bolsheviks, who should know better, have not as yet set up a statue of Mr. Churchill on the boulevards of Moscow.

But I still have hopes of the Kuomintang. I still hope that when the inevitable *denkmal*, "soaring aloft some fifty braccia," commemorates, in Canton or in Peking, the establishment of the Chinese Workers' Republic, there will be found in it some niche recording the part played in the consummation of the great work by Sir Austen Chamberlain, Sir Reginald Stubbs, Inspector Everson and numerous other Englishmen.

At present, I am afraid, our English Pharaoh, like his Egyptian prototype, gets nothing but abuse for his loyal fulfilment of his historical function. Yet he, like the Egyptian, deserves at any rate our pity, if not our homage.

Like the Pharaoh of Memphis (or may be it was Luxor), the Pharaoh of Downing Street is an estimable gentleman in a muddle-headed panic, defending the only civilisation he understands against dark forces threatening its destruction.

The earlier Pharaoh stood for all the respectabilities, all the culture, all the economic efficiencies, for the sanctity of the law and of treaties (albeit unequal treaties), for the prestige of the *sahib-log*. He saw them threatened by a mob of mutinous Asiatics, incited by a little gang of extremists (the worst of all being a notorious criminal and, of course, a Jew). He saw a perfectly unreasonable nationalist agitation, putting forward perfectly

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preposterous demands, probably financed by Midianite gold. He found himself, when he opposed them, smitten by the strangest and most unpleasant plagues. He wavered irresolutely between conciliating these pestilent foreign workmen and—under the influence of die-hards, who pointed out the dangers of weakness—adopting a policy of iron firmness. And so, bewildered and irresolute, ill-advised and ill-informed, he drifted through plague after plague until the Red Sea overwhelmed him and his hosts.

It is just so with our Downing Street Pharaohs and this astonishing Chinese Puzzle to which they cannot see any solution.

A year or so ago, apart from geographical and terminological complications, it seemed comparatively simple.

All that was needed was firmness. The Anglo-Chinese who were clamouring for bloodshed in Shanghai, for the bombardment of Canton, for a march on Peking, must be calmed down. Such things were impossible, since no other Power would consent to them, and, moreover, they were quite unnecessary. There was no need to get excited. Quiet firmness was all that was needed : a little display of force perhaps to emphasise the firmness. But if we kept our heads, showed the Chinese that we would not be intimidated, that we would not yield a single point to threats or agitation, then everything would right itself. The Chinese would tire of Bolshevik agitation, the supplies of Russian gold would dry up, and then, since the whole movement was artificially fomented by a few students and a few hireling propagandists, all would be well again, and the Chinese would once more realise that England was their best friend.

True, there was still the civil war. There was Feng in the North, actually in control of Peking. But Chang Tso-lin (" a good man : the strong man China needs ") would soon push him out. There was Canton in the South. But after all the Cantonese troops were only a " rag-tag and bobtail army." The " Government " was unstable ; firmly handled, it would not be very troublesome. It had climbed down at once in 1924 when the MacDonald Government had threatened to bombard Canton if the Fascist " Merchant Volunteers " were interfered with. When Chang Tso-lin had settled with Feng he could easily finish off Canton. Then we could make some vague and not very serious concessions in the

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matter of tariffs to the new Government at Peking, and settle down comfortably as before.

Thus Pharaoh, not in the least anticipating plagues. All his information pointed to it. It did not occur to him that his information was derived from sources whose judgment of the new China was about as valuable and about as well-founded as that of the average member of the Carlton Club on Poplar or the Rhondda Valley.

Firmness enough had been shown. The Shanghai shooting in May had been followed up by the "Shakee massacre" in June, and by the machine-gunning of Hankow in July. Pharaoh waited for the results to show themselves.

They did show themselves, emphatically and immediately, but in a quite unexpected fashion. The boycott of British trade shut down more firmly than ever at Shanghai and Canton. Pharaoh hardened his heart and secured the suppression of the report of the Commission appointed by the Diplomatic Corps to investigate the Shanghai shootings. It was a curiously stupid move. The truth, of course, leaked out; and the effect was to convince the Chinese that England, far more than any other foreign Power, was the particular and determined enemy of the national movement.

Japan, it may be noted, was even now "getting out from under." Better informed than the British, better understanding the Chinese, not obsessed by any delusions of racial superiority, they were beginning to sum up the situation. Chinese nationalism, they saw, was at any rate a possible winner. It must not be hopelessly antagonised. It must even be persuaded that Japan was a friend. So, and so only, it might be possible to consolidate Japanese influence in Manchuria and to exact its "independence" when the time came as the *quid pro quo* for benevolent neutrality. Japan set herself, with much success, to persuade the Chinese to forget that it was a murder by a Japanese foreman which had started the Shanghai trouble. She began to pose as the champion of China, the advocate of the abolition of extra-territoriality.

The wrath of the Chinese began to concentrate more and more upon Great Britain. It was the British who had done all the killing at Shanghai, at Shameen, and at Hankow. It was the British who had threatened to bombard Wanhsien (an earlier

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exploit, in 1924, of that same *Cockchafer* which *did* bombard the city this year) and Canton. It was the British who were carrying on a ferocious anti-national propaganda (their local newspapers contrasting sharply with the American and Japanese). It was the British who were prominent in every anti-national intrigue and activity.

British psychology added to the British difficulties. For of all the Imperialist peoples who are in contact—and so generally in conflict with the Chinese—the British are at once the most race-conscious and the most caste-conscious. The French are notoriously colour-blind and incurably petty-bourgeois. The Japanese are themselves a yellow race. The Germans, chastened by the war and lacking in gunboats, have abandoned their former arrogance. The American still combines the psychology of the missionary with the psychology of the bagman. But the British are above all things, gentlemen : and they pay the penalty for it. The British communities are plentifully sprinkled with the products of Eton and " the House," of Osborne and Dartmouth, of Sandhurst or " the shop." And those who are not of the enchanted circle wish they were and do their best to imitate the real thing. So to the Chinese, as to all " lesser breeds without the law " their attitude is one of an intolerable superiority. In their bullying as in their patronage they are Olympian, unswervingly convinced of their own rectitude, never doubting that " they are the people." Nor can they ever understand what hatreds this breeds in those who face it.

This gentleman-business—as Ambassador Gerard might have called it—does not stimulate understanding. And Pharaoh, just because he is a gentleman, has never understood—until too late, plagues have forced some glimmering of comprehension into him.

He could not understand what was happening in China. It was clear to him that it was all a Bolshevik plot : that the Canton government was—in the well-bred, polished phraseology of the Governor of Hong Kong—a " regime imposed from without and supported by mercenaries " ; that, in Sir Austen's phrase it was an " extremist faction, under blindly anti-British Communist influences, whose lawless actions disgusted all sections of the Chinese people."

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Incurably blind, incredibly ill-informed, bewildered by the changing tangle of Chinese politics, the British Government turned this way and that seeking a remedy for the troubles that had come on them. Their premises and their objects were simple enough. The Nationalist Movement was a Moscow plot against the British Empire. The struggle in China was part of their secular war as children of light with the dark forces of the Kremlin. Therefore, one of two things. Either Great Britain must herself enter the field against the Nationalists and their Russian allies : or she must—in accordance with a respectable tradition—find someone to do the work for her.

The Hong Kong and Shanghai junkers, eagerly supported by a large section of the home Press, were for the simple, direct solution. Canton by its boycott strikes, was bleeding Hong Kong to death. Therefore, the British Fleet should blow Canton into the river. What else was the British fleet for ?

Simple and direct. But the unhappy men in Downing Street realised that this simplicity and directness—well enough half a century ago—were impossible in a sadly changed world. Other Powers—notably America and Japan—would not stand for the blowing to pieces of a profitable market. Single-handed intervention would bring such a crop of diplomatic troubles that it was out of the question. The other powers—as Mr. Amery indiscreetly admitted—were sounded as to the possibility of joint intervention. They refused flatly. Hong Kong had to content itself with soft words from Sir Austen and with a loan of £3,000,000 from Mr. Amery.

Direct intervention being barred by the veto of Tokio and Washington there remained the other plan of finding an ally. But here again was a tangle of trouble. Chang Tso-lin was the obvious first choice. But Chang, approached in the summer of 1925, had made demands quite incapable of fulfilment. Open subsidies to White Generals were no longer feasible. Money was not squanderable as in the days of Denikin. Chang had gladly intimidated Shanghai, shot trade union leaders, broken up trade unions, suppressed the strike movement. But he would not march against Feng and the Kuominchun, let alone against Canton, without heavy subsidies. So during the summer he sulked. And

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the name of Wu Pei-fu began to be mentioned again. By the autumn, Wu, who had fled, broken and solitary after his defeat by Chang, appeared again on the Yang-tse, miraculously revived, disposing of money and munitions. He had had no official support, of course, but he had had unofficial encouragement from official quarters. And it is pretty certain that he had had financial aid from quarters which had been loath to back Chang because he was a protégé of the Japanese, but which had always been more than friendly to Wu.

In the north the game became amazingly complex. And official eyes, still hypnotised by the fiction that Peking was the capital, were fixed on the north ; though in the south the quiet economic struggle between Canton and Hong Kong went relentlessly forward. The only spectacular interlude there was an expedition against Canton directed from the British colony by the semi-brigand Chen Chiung-ming. He took Swatow, whereat the Hong Kong clubs thrilled to the belief that the end of Canton was near. But by November his army was in fragments and he himself of no further account. And the boycott went on.

If the south was undramatic, the north was all drama. Every day brought a new development, an advance, a retreat, an assassination, a conspiracy. Even the Japanese were bewildered. The main events were Chang's advance, his sudden recoil in November ; the mutiny of his troops ; his almost-overthrow ; his rescue from destruction by the aid of 20,000 Japanese troops ; his new advance.

By the spring, a policy seemed clear. Through all the tangle was one visible fact. Feng Yu-hsiang's Kuominchun forces, national in spirit, in close and friendly relations with Soviet Russia must be smashed. Chang and Wu together could do it. And then they could deal with the Cantonese.

With infinite pains Chang and Wu were persuaded to forget old hatreds, to combine to " exterminate Bolshevism." " When Wu Pei-fu talks about exterminating," wrote one enthusiastic chronicler, " he means it literally." By April they had driven the Kuominchun from Peking. By June it seemed safe that Wu should turn his attention to the south, leaving Chang to deal with the Kuominchun who still held the Hankow pass. A " reinsurance "

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arrangement safeguarded Shanghai by establishing Sun Chuan-fang as War Lord of the five Eastern provinces.

Pharaoh began to flatter himself that his policy was succeeding. Then suddenly everything began to go wrong again. Instead of Wu marching victoriously to Canton, the Cantonese, having completed their preparations, struck swiftly northward into Wu's territory. The Kuominchun vanished from the Hankow pass : abandoned their base at Kalgan. An apparent victory—until it became clear that this was no retreat, but a remarkable strategical move. They had left Chang to kick his heels in and around Peking, or to return to Mukden and ruminate on the collapse of his currency while they, shifting their base to Pao-tu, turned southward into Shensi to aid the southern Kuomintang in the conquest of Central China.

At a stroke all the intrigueing of a year went for nothing. Chang became of no consequence, while in Peking futile diplomats faced a shadow government while the fate of China was being settled in the Yang-tse valley.

The plague was spreading with a vengeance. The red flag with the sun on a blue gound in its corner—Sun Yat-sen's flag, known from Yunnan to the Great Wall—flew in Hunan, in Kwei-chow, in Kiang-si, in Hupeh, in Honan, in Shensi, in Szechwan. China was going red under the eyes of a diplomatic corps stranded impotently in Peking. Wu faded into ruin. Sun Chuan-fang was a doubtful factor. Chang, under strong pressure from Tokio, showed signs of an intention to content himself with holding Manchuria and leaving China to go its own way. And Hong Kong was bleeding to death.

Pharaoh, plague-smitten as never before, began to behave in the manner of his kind. Since the opposition was proving too powerful he would buy it off. Since hostility was proving unprofitable and a fruitful source of plagues, he would try friendship —or the appearance of friendship. The diplomatic calculations got to work. Perhaps if the game against Chinese nationalism were given up as lost the game against Soviet Russia might still be won. Perhaps Canton, in return for recognition, for restoration of trade, for an industrial loan, in short for the by no means valueless consideration of British friendship, would break with Soviet

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Russia, would send Borodin and his fellows packing, would replace them by British advisers. Perhaps, if we befriended, instead of opposing, the national movement we might make of it a barrier against Bolshevism, an ally of British Imperialism.

"And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said unto them I have sinned this time : the Lord is righteous and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail : and I will let you go and ye shall stay no longer."

"But as for thee and thy servants," came Moses' answer, "I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God."

Moses was right. Pharaoh could not change his nature : he and his servants. He might plan a policy of conciliation : but he could not carry it out. Economic facts, the class antagonism of Egyptian exploiters and Jewish exploited, were too strong for him. Or, if you prefer the Bible phrase, he "hardened his heart again he and his servants, neither would he let the children of Israel go."

History will repeat itself. The fundamental antagonism will be too strong for the subtlest diplomacy. Mr. Lampson may go East determined to make peace with the Chinese nationalists and to swing them into alliance against Russia. But, clever diplomat though he is, he is bound to fail. For the interests of the British in China are quite definitely opposed to the interests of Chinese nationalism ; and the interests of Russia are quite as definitely linked with them. That is the determining economic fact. If Pharaoh is to make friends with the children of Israel, he must make his peace with Jehovah, which means that he must throw over Osiris and Isis and Thoth, and quarrel with those "servants" who are his masters. If Mr. Lampson is to succeed in his policy he must side with the Chinese against the Hong Kong and Shanghai junkers : he must throw over the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and the Chambers of Commerce, and the clubs and Eton and Oxford, and the captain of the "Cockchafer," which is absurd.

Therefore Mr. Lampson will fail : and the plagues will begin again.

Poor Pharaoh. Bewildered and plague-stricken he is drifting steadily to the Red Sea.

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MEXICO TO-DAY

By E. VARGA

THERE are but few countries to-day which are so interesting to us as Mexico, both as regards social and foreign politics. It is the only country, except South China, where there is in a certain sense a regime of workers and peasants. It is a country which is howled down by the capitalist Press all over the world as a Bolshevist land.

This "bolshevism," which we shall deal with further on in detail, is the natural reaction against a system of land robbery which has been carried on for centuries, and has led to the soil of Mexico gradually concentrating in the hands of a very small group of exploiters, whilst those who actually till the ground have been left literally without a vestige of land owned by themselves. The history of Mexico is the history of robbery of land from the natives, and it was not until the agrarian revolution of 1910-1923 that a certain change began to make itself felt. The solution of the problem is, however, still far distant. The agrarian history of Mexico may serve as example of the whole agrarian history of South America.

Besides the agrarian question, Mexico has another problem of special importance, its struggle against the Imperialism of the United States. American capital presses forward unceasingly into Mexico, and the predatory corruption of whatever group of the ruling class holds government power facilitates in every possible way this advance. The struggle against American Imperialism is thus closely bound up with the struggle of the workers and peasants against the large landowners and the church. A struggle against American Imperialism signifies—so far as we can judge by the scanty material at our disposal—a simultaneous struggle against the large landowning class and the bourgeoisie of Mexico itself. It seems as if Mexico is either to be finally transformed into an American colony by the United States, or the close connection between American capital and native exploitation will lead to an anti-capitalist upheaval in the country. In a certain sense the situation is analogous to that in China.

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The Agrarian Question in Mexico

Mexico is a thinly populated country. In 1910 its population counted 15 million souls inhabiting an area of approximately 2 million square kilometres, or 7·2 persons per square km.

Mexico is about as large as Germany, France, Spain, England and Italy all together, and yet there is a land famine there such as is known scarcely anywhere else in the world. Here there are two points to be taken into consideration. In the first place, the density of the population varies greatly. In the central districts, for instance in the state of Mexico, the density is 41 per square km., whilst in the dry regions of the north-west the number of inhabitants sinks under 1 per square km. This is to be accounted for by the great differences in the fertility of the soil. Only 8 per cent. is suitable for tillage. A report issued for 1910 shows that of a total area of 491 million acres, 300 millions are uncultivatable, and of the rest 120 million acres are pasture land.

Although the technique of tillage is still very backward in many parts of Mexico, the area capable of cultivation would fully suffice to cover the needs of the population were the land not completely in the hands of a small number of large landowners. The landownership statistics compiled for the individual states in 1910 show that even where the conditions are most favourable, in California (Mexican California), only 11·8 per cent. of the families engaged in agricultural labour own land of their own, 88 per cent. owning no land at all, whilst in the province worst off in this respect, Oaxaca, only 0·2 of these families owned land, and 99·8 per cent. owned none. The average has unfortunately not been calculated, but must lie between 2 and 3 per cent.

The small percentage of landowners among the large agricultural population shows that the soil is obviously concentrated in the hands of a few mighty landowners. As a matter of fact, there are landowners in Mexico possessing areas widely exceeding any European conception of landownership. In Mexico there are areas of landed property, belonging to one owner, as large as Belgium and Holland together, estates which it takes a railway train a full day to cross.

It is obvious that in a country like this, where one great tract of privately owned land adjoins another, and 99 per cent. of the

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rural population possesses no land of its own, the great landowners must be absolute lords of the country. Up to 1915, the population of Mexico were the complete slaves of the large landowners. The situation has been somewhat alleviated by the agrarian revolution, but it does not appear to be fundamentally changed.

The Position of the Agricultural Labourers

The natives deprived of their land became, and are still for the most part, the actual serfs of the large landowners. Each great estate has its serf population (the "peons") averaging 2,000 to 5,000 persons. Although serfdom has been formally abolished, it still continues in a form of enforced dependence. The landowner gives the peon a cash advance, which can never possibly be repaid out of the frightfully low wages paid, and the law of the country forbids the peon to leave an employer to whom he is in debt. The statistics for 1910 show 3,183,402 peons, employed on 834 estates, to be in this state of slavery-indebtedness. When the families of these peons are counted, we have a total of 10 million human beings, or two-thirds of the total population. Besides these there were only 410,000 persons engaged in agriculture, the independent middle owners (ranchos) and farmers, and these existed for the most part in the utmost poverty and misery, their land being entirely insufficient.

Mexico—the Spoil of American Imperialism

The bourgeoisie of the United States has always regarded the whole region around the Caribbean Sea as their special "sphere of influence."[1] Mexico itself is limited on the north and north-east by the United States; on the east lie Cuba and Haiti; on the south the districts occupied by the United States in protection of the Panama Canal. Politically it is surrounded by the forces of the United States, economically it is dependent on this same country. Any attempt at putting the revolutionary solution of the agrarian question into actual practice encounters the resistance of the superior

[1] As early as eighty years ago the United States made a raid on Mexico, and robbed it of half its territory: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. The land distribution and agrarian constitution of the "democratic South" still show traces of Spanish land robbery. The imperialist raid being made by the bourgeoisie of the United States on the south is well described, though in rather too literary a style, in the works of the champion of the independence of Latin America, the Argentine writer Manuel Ugarte, for instance, in *The Destiny of a Continent*, New York, 1925.

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power of American interests, which are here safeguarding an especially precious booty : petroleum. Mexico's wealth of petroleum is its misfortune, has made it the bone of contention between American and English petroleum capital, a mere petroleum colony.

Petroleum was first bored in Mexico in 1901, by Dohenny, the notorious American petroleum capitalist.[2] But it was not until after 1910 that the petroleum resources were really opened up. The output increased from half a million tons in 1920 to 29 million tons in 1921 or 25 per cent. of the world's output. Since 1921 there has been a decrease to 21 million tons in 1924.

The output was lowered by salt water breaking into the bores in some places. It has, however, been ascertained that up to now only a fraction of the deposits has been opened up.

There are two points characteristic of Mexico as a colonial country :—

(1) The whole of this wealth is entirely in the hands of foreigners.
(2) The petroleum is exported as *crude oil* ; it is scarcely worked up at all in the country itself.

The English " Mexican Eagle " has been the first to establish refining works ; the output produced by American capital is exported almost entirely as crude oil. There are twenty refining works, producing fuel oil for the most part. " The other products of the refineries are imported for the most part from the United States."

There has been a violent struggle between American and English capital for the exploitation of Mexican crude oil, fought will all possible weapons : revolutions and counter-revolutions, diplomacy, stock exchange tactics . . . ending finally with the victory of the United States. The various concerns participate in the following proportions in the output (percentages) :—

	1923	1924
Standard Oil	15	35
Dohenny	24	23
Mexican Gulf	8	7
American share	57	74
Royal Dutch Shell	26	13
International capital	10	11

[2] We here take our facts from an excellent book which has recently been published : *Die Erdölwirtschaft der Welt* by K. Krüger and G. Ponhardt, Stuttgart, 1926, pp. 185-200.

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The crude oil obtained is almost entirely exported : 75 per cent. as crude oil, 5 per cent. as distillates, the remainder as semi-products. Only 10 per cent. is consumed in the country itself, principally for running the producing and refining plants of the oil exported, 78 per cent. goes to the United States, 6 per cent. to England, the rest to South America, Cuba and Canada.

The revolutionary governments of Mexico have attempted to prevent the unscrupulous exploitation of the natural wealth of the country by the Americans, or at least to restrict it and to obtain a financial advantage from it. The constitution established by Carranza in 1917, article 27, enacts that land concessions—these including the right to exploit underground deposits—were to be granted to Mexicans or Mexican companies only, whilst those already granted to foreigners were to be subjected to a revision.

This attempt led to a lengthy conflict with England and the United States, whose diplomatists defended the " acquired rights " of the petroleum capitalists with the utmost energy.[3] The Obregon government was positively forced to beat a retreat in 1920, and to recognise the concessions granted before 1917 as legal.

England has proved even more sensitive on the subject of the violation of the sacred rights of petroleum capital than even the United States. For eight years, until the autumn of 1925, England refused to recognise the Mexican government ; this as protest against paragraph 27 of the constitution of 1917. Not even the MacDonald government would recognise the government. *The Times* of April 8, 1924, writes with obvious satisfaction that the President of Mexico and his ministers have probably never supposed that a Labour Government would demand protection for British rights and British property as a necessary basis for recognition, or would ask for proofs of the stability and integrity of the Mexican government. The MacDonald government once more took sides against the working class in this case, preferring to side

[3] Force and corruption, the original means of accumulation, were unscrupulously employed. Mr. Dohenny, for instance, promised a million dollars to the Secretary of State of the U.S.A., MacAdoo, the son-in-law of the highly moral Wilson, if his " negotiations " with Mexico were successful. Thus the *New York Times*, March 11, 1924.

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rather with Anglo-Dutch petroleum capital than with the Mexican workers.

Meanwhile every detail of petroleum legislation continues to be the subject of the bitterest conflicts. At the beginning of April, 1926, a new petroleum law was passed in Mexico. This enacts that all petroleum rights are to be converted into concessions running for fifty years from the time of the commencement of exploitation. The special correspondent of *The Times*, April 20, 1926, naturally furious, declared this to be a fresh act of confiscation, as in many cases the rights of possession terminate within a few years, and fall to the Mexican government, and condemned it at the same time as a violation of the agreement made between the United States and Mexico in April, 1923, prohibiting the retroactive effect of § 27.

Equally severe criticism is exercised against the aliens law, which enacts that foreigners are not to acquire land or water rights for a distance of 100 km. from the frontier or 50 km. from the coast, or to become stockholders in a Mexican company possessing such rights. Foreign stockholders must declare in writing that they submit to the Mexican laws. Property already held by foreigners on this territory may be held till the death of the owner. The heirs must sell it to the Mexicans within five years. The capitalists judge this to be confiscation, as no Mexican possesses the money to buy.

The Times expresses the opinion that the *sole certain way of putting an end to the confiscation policy of the Mexican government is a closer diplomatic co-operation among the great powers*. This is characteristic for the comparative forces waging against one another in Mexico. The United States permit England no armed action in Mexico ; England is thus dependent on the aid of the United States. Petroleum capital will doubtless find some means of destroying the effect of even this new law, and the petroleum will finally remain the property of the Americans. The penetration of the country by American capital is observable in every sphere. The nationalised railways have had to be given back to America. American capita is pressing forward into every branch of industry, it monopolises foreign trade, and is authoritative in finance. It is converting Mexico gradually into a colony.

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England is being supplanted more and more by America in the *investment of capital.* The figures dealing with capital investment are, however, extremely contradictory. In general England's share is estimated at only a fifth of that of the United States.

In *foreign trade* the United States have incontestably the supremacy. America supplies not only large quantities of goods, but every description of articles of consumption which would find a sale in an average town, village, or market place in the United States. (See *Trade with Latin America.* Dept. of Commerce, 1924, p. 2.) Mexico is almost a part of the home markets of the United States. The same articles are exported or imported, according to local conditions. Crude oil from California goes to the West Mexican refineries of the " Mexican Eagle," cotton is imported in the east from Mexico to the United States, and from the United States to Mexico in the west, &c.

The value of imports has increased from 187 million pesos in 1913 to 304 millions in 1924, and the value of exports from 261 million pesos to 711 millions during the same period. The preponderance of the United States in Mexican foreign trade is seen in the figures of its share in 1924 of 233 million pesos in imports and 493 millions in exports.

This comparative position of exports and imports in general, and the great share carried off by the United States, gives an idea of the intensity with which American capital is pillaging Mexico. There is not only an import surplus, but an " investment of capital," that is, the surplus value expropriated in Mexico is partially allowed to accumulate in Mexico itself.

The finances of the country are equally under the influence of the United States. Mexico has no trouble with the rate of exchange of the currency, for this is practically all metal, a natural consequence of the large amount of gold and silver produced in the country. The large amount of silver coined in 1924 has caused a disagio of silver money in comparison to gold, to the amount of 8 per cent. Paper money is but little in circulation ; only banknotes. On the other hand, interest was not paid on the national debt during the revolution, and this gave the Americans, the chief creditors, an excellent excuse for interfering. A bank of issue was recently established, and the payment of interest on state debts resumed.

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Mexico is being subordinated to the United States all along the line : by political power, by the investment of capital, by means of foreign trade, and by cultural propaganda. The A. F. of Labour is working along the same line. It is true that resistance is growing among the new bourgeoisie of all Latin American countries. But the subordination of the country cannot be prevented by bourgeois means. As in China, the anti-imperialist movement can only be victorious in the form of a social revolution.

Industry and the Industrial Workers

During the last decade, industry has made certain advances in Mexico. It is hampered by the poverty of the agricultural labourers forming two-thirds of the population, for these cannot buy industrial goods, whilst the rich ruling class covers its requirements abroad for the most part.

In 1923, the number of industrial workers was as follows[4] :—

Total	284,000
Mining workers	85,000
Textile workers	52,000
Food workers	36,000
Transport workers..	7,000

In a total population of 15 millions, this shows a very slight degree of industrialisation. The colonial dependence of the country on the United States retards industrialisation, for American capital prefers to supply Mexico with finished articles, rather than establish undertakings in so " bolshevist " a country.

It is difficult to ascertain the position of the industrial workers. According to the letter of the law, their position must be good. Paragraph 123 of the Mexican constitution of 1917 prescribes : eight hours day, seven hours for night work, six hours for children, no night work for women and children, one day of rest weekly ; cash wages and obligatory participation in profits ; the right to strike ; three months' wages for wrongful dismissal ; obligatory arbitration by the State, &c. If an arbitration board find a strike justified, it has the right to oblige the employer to pay a part or the whol of the wages lost to the workers during a strike. This actually happened some time ago (in 1923) on the occasion of a strike in a printing works in Mexico. A French textile factory

[4] *Commerce Yearbook*, 1925, p. 574. Published by Dept. of Commerce, U.S.A.

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arbitrarily discharged half-a-dozen workers ; when it refused to take them back the government confiscated the factory until the workers were reinstated.

It is, however, difficult to determine how much of these regulations is carried out, and how much is merely paper.[5] In any case, these laws have not prevented foreign capitalists from making gigantic profits in Mexico.

The report published by the Communist International, *One Year of Work and Struggle*, gives the following statements on the wages in Mexico for 1925 :—

Average wage of an industrial worker	3.0 pesos
Average wage in the country	0.75 pesos

The wages of the women and juvenile workers are considerably lower. In the country there are women and children working twelve to fourteen hours for 10 to 20 centavos per hour, and in industry nine to ten hours daily for 25 to 70 centavos per hour.

In many cases the State authorities appear to be aiming deliberately at raising the wage level.

A report issued by the American Consul in Yukatan states that the State Board of Arbitration ordered the following increases in wages to be made (June 19, 1925) :—

For a monthly wage of	Per cent.
less than 20 pesos	200
21—30 „	150
31—40 „	125
41—70 „	100

Conclusion

The general survey may be summed up as follows: The present government, incapable and unwilling to solve the agrarian problem by way of revolution, is attempting to create an aristocracy of industrial workers which is to combine with the growing inland bourgeoisie to form a counterweight against the revolutionary rural proletariat. Although the wages of the industrial workers are extremely low, speaking absolutely, they are still much higher than those of the agricultural labourers, so that the industrial workers form a comparative aristocracy. The promotion of the trade

[5] The actual carrying out of these laws requires legislation for the individual States. Such legislation, that of the State of Jalisco for 1923, is given in the *Monthly Labour Review of the Labour Office of the U.S.A.*, June, 1924.

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unions of the industrial workers, the admittance of a trade union leader into the government as Minister for Industry and Labour, the close alliance between the Mexican trade unions and the A.F. of L., all this goes to show that the Calles government is seeking to corrupt the industrial workers, to create a bourgeois industrial workers' aristocracy, and to divide the industrial proletariat from the rural proletariat, to the end that the latter may be robbed of its natural vanguard.

The first task of the Communist Party of Mexico is to prevent this split, to unite the forces of the proletariat in town and country, and to carry out the revolutionary solution of the agrarian question. During the last few weeks, whilst this report has been in the Press, a sharp conflict has arisen between the government and the church in Mexico. This is a conflict being carried on by the working-class, the bourgeoisie and a section of the secular landowners against the church in its capacity of especially privileged gigantic landowner and banker. At the same time it is a manoeuvre for distracting attention from the revolutionary agrarian movement.

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HOW COME THESE TRAITORS?

By RUTLAND BOUGHTON

IF a dictatorship of the proletariat were declared in Britain to-morrow I don't suppose that a single individual capitalist would suffer in his person beyond the suffering consequent on putting in his daily work. But I am not so sure of the fate of two or three prominent men in the Labour Movement. Thomas and MacDonald, for instance, are hated by the rank and file as no capitalist is hated. And now I expect that Hamilton Fyfe will be added to the number, for in outspoken treachery he has gone farthest of all. (Witness his self-exposure in the *Sunday Express*.) During the Railway Strike of 1921 I heard a rich landowner say that he believed Thomas was working in the interests of the companies. At the time it seemed absurd to me. But now that Thomas's policy has proved so disastrous to the workers it may be useful to look carefully into the matter. If it were a mere question of baseness of character the problem would be simple, but it seems incredible that such baseness could exist in a man whose personality has been so grateful to the rank and file of railwaymen. They are not fools. And if on the other hand this recurrent danger and this failure of leadership in the Labour Movement are brought about by factors other than human baseness it is necessary to understand what causes them. For if we understand we may be able to get rid of some of the causes, or at least be prepared for them as they arise and before they develop destructively.

The example of Hamilton Fyfe is fresh in our minds, and will serve my purpose best, as I have been thrown into some personal contact with him. In 1923 the *Daily Herald* was making frantic appeals for support to all Socialists and Labour folk. It was in some danger, and its policy was consequently to the Left. During that time one or two articles of a distinctly pro-Bolshevik nature were accepted, and I subsequently joined the staff as musical critic. But as the paper grew in influence and increased its circulation its policy moved to the Right. At first my articles had only been edited to a very small extent, but as time went on even

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friendly references to Russia, and especially to the Trades Union Report on Russia, were blue-pencilled. The ostensible reason was that I was the music man, but as a matter of fact there are in that report one or two very important references to the arts and to the workers' opportunities for artistic and musical education. And finally, when I wrote in support of our own Musicians' Union, whose immediate needs happened to conflict with MacDonald's policy in foreign affairs, the whole article was turned down. Of course I resigned, though my personal relations with Fyfe had always been pleasant. Some time later the paper again showed signs of a movement to the Left, and again I joined the staff; but this proved to be a much shorter term. One article, containing a slight criticism of the Eccleston Square people, was promptly returned with a friendly letter asking if I should expect the editor of the *Morning Post* to print an attack upon the Duke of Northumberland. As a matter of fact I should, though I should know that a defence would not lag far behind. I should expect a live editor to be glad of such things, he being aware that in any case he has the freedom and effect of the last word.

However, Fyfe's point of view was disclosed not so much in suppressing criticisms of his immediate employers, but in his mistaken idea as to who were the real owners of the *Daily Herald*. His answer made it clear to me why the *Daily Herald* was failing as a Labour paper—why, in spite of the great awakening of class-consciousness among our people, the paper had so miserable a circulation. And Fyfe stressed his unhappy point of view in a farewell message to the present editor, when he spoke of his hopes that Mellor would increase the circulation. Does the *Daily Herald* belong to the Labour Movement as a whole, or is it an instrument for imposing upon us an oligarchy of officials? Has it been the editor and his staff who have slightly increased the circulation of the *Daily Herald*, or has it not been more particularly the Left Wing and Communist sections of the Labour rank and file who have pushed the paper in spite of very indifferent editorship, while the Right Wingers have continued to enjoy the *Daily Express*, *Mail*, and *News*.

Now, is it not clear that the mentality which believes in the superior virtues and right of leaders and public men is really

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opposed to the interests of the people and to every principle of Socialism? It came out very clearly during the General Strike. Eccleston Square sent out agonised appeals that the masses should trust their leaders—and that while these leaders were receiving such a measure of trust as had never before been accorded to British Labour leaders. Perhaps part of the agony lay in the fact that they knew as they sent out the appeals that they were engaged in betraying those who trusted them. Anyhow, it was very noticeable that while these cries were ringing the Communists were making an exactly opposite appeal, urging the Labour "leaders" to trust the people who were standing so solid and faithful even where they were isolated in little country places, even while they were being lied to and threatened by means of every instrument which the Government could control and organise. This difference of mentality is a vital one. So long as officials trust their rank and file, so long as theoretical Socialists realise that the masses of the people (even though starved of education) are a creative and not a destructive force (as the master class quite honestly fears), so long these officials will be faithful. The miners' leaders have proved better men than their predecessors not because they are men of extraordinary mentality, but because they have known and trusted their rank and file, and acted strictly according to the will of that rank and file both for good and for ill. And it has got to be so. Leaders cannot trick the masses into victory. When they think the masses are mistaken they can try to persuade them, but from the moment that the real creative pressure ceases in the rank and file, from that moment the leaders can only mark time or lead their people by trickery to tragedy. I have referred to the doubt which is in the minds of many Labour officials as to whether the masses are really a creative force, a doubt which as a matter of fact is more current among the intellectuals than among the proletarian leaders. But in any case it represents a point of view which is entirely foolish and inexplicable to the rank and file, who know their own faith and cannot understand why their officials should cease to believe in it. That is why they have no word but "traitor" for men like Thomas, MacDonald, and Fyfe.

There seem to be three main causes for the degeneration of character which attacks Labour officials—two of them due to the

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stupid modesty (perhaps even in some measure to the personal jealousy) of the rank and file, the third due to the prudence of the capitalist class. So long as the workers choose their servants outside their own class so long they will suffer from the capitalist education (infinitely more dangerous than their own lack of education) which has moulded the brain of these servants. A peculiar example of that mistake has happened twice in their choice of editor for a Labour daily. For the *Daily Citizen* they went to the staff of the *Daily Mail*. They got a real professional pressman and set going a paper with a miserable two-faced, bandy-legged policy, while a group of amateur Left Wingers and Communists set going the first *Daily Herald* with its magnificent record as a workers' fighting organ. But the Right-Wing officials of the Labour Movement learned nothing by the experience, and so in place of Lansbury they installed Fyfe. He played the man to his trades union masters with the perfection which would be expected from a *Daily Mailer*, though he didn't always love his new bosses, as witness his resentment when Robert Williams was appointed business manager.

But Fyfe could give out no more than he had in him, and in spite of his benevolent hopes for a better world his mind had been warped by a long capitalist training. You have only to read his book on Mexico, for example, to realise that, though he is full of kind thoughts, he is absolutely without political understanding. In one of his efforts to keep me out of danger he assured me that art is more important than politics. That could only mean that in politics he only saw the sordid activities of capitalism. If he understood politics from the Socialist point of view he would have known that there can be no more great art until the workers have made the world afresh, and no more art even of a second-rate kind so long as capitalism continues to destroy the remains of our existing civilisation.

A man with Fyfe's brain sees the end of all things in a victorious proletariat, and when he sabotages their will to power he honestly believes that he is saving civilisation itself. For the workers to choose such a man for their editor, or retain officials who could have made such a choice, is folly. It is a false modesty which leads the workers to believe that the right men are those

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who have enjoyed a capitalistic education, and made a name for themselves, and a salary for themselves, in the markets of capitalist journalism. And that brings us to the second cause of the recurrent treachery in the Labour forces, namely, the overpayment of officials. I do not mean that £20 a week is more than is needed to-day for a family of four people; I mean that a man receiving £20 cannot truly understand the difficulties of a man earning £5 a week. To pay the secretary of a trade union or the editor of a Labour paper a higher salary than the average wages of the men he is intended to serve is contrary to every principle of Socialism and common sense. The theory appears to be that if the Labour Movement is to have really first-class officials they must be kept for Labour by the receipt of the sort of wage they could get from the boss class. But the boss class can always afford to pay the highest salaries and so secure the most efficient of these men who are for sale. Therefore of such men Labour can in any case only get the second best, the men left over when the boss class has had its pick—unless, of course, a certain number of very efficient men are actually allowed to put on the livery of Labour the better to do the bosses' own work; and in that case it is fully to be expected that they will get a good deal more than Labour pays them.

I don't mean that such men would receive actual bribes of cash. That would be too obvious, and would not properly achieve the masters' object. But popular Labour leaders whose ideas are flabby and offer no real threat to the capitalist system may be invited, for instance, to write in the capitalist Press, with great advantage to themselves and to the increase of a reputation for broadmindedness among the masters. Or they may be called upon from time to time to act as Labour adviser to capitalist organisations. But under the most favourable circumstances, even when the highly-paid leader is a man of principle, he is unable properly to serve or represent the workess if he lives at a higher rate than they do. It is not his fault so much as the fault of the workers who overpay him. A man who gets the cut of a joint every day in the week forgets (if he ever knew) the needs of a man who lives chiefly on bread and potatoes. A man who can take his family once a week to the theatre cannot understand the intellectual starvation of one who finds it hard to afford a daily paper.

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Further, if an official is paid well enough to mix without too much discomfort in circles frequented by the master class, he will be open to another demoralising influence—to that flattery which is the third cause of official Labour treachery. When MacDonald got into such a muddle over the forged letter I heard a great dramatist remark, " He has fallen a victim to the charming manners of the English governing classes." And while the workers will have to take steps to guard against that sort of failure they must not despise too much the men who have failed. Not one of the workers themselves but would become weakened in moral fibre if day in day out, year in year out, he were assailed by the subtle sweetness of pretended and genuine admiration from fair women of fine culture, and by the even more powerful flattery of their men when they ask for advice and incidentally learn many solid and useful facts which lie behind the Labour official's opinions, the knowledge of these facts being so necessary for the continuance in power of the capitalist class. This is not a wilful treachery of the official : he cannot help himself in the false position of superiority which a high salary gives him.

None knows better than the workers themselves that it is generally unpaid men who give them the best service in times of crisis. These men should be marked for official positions, and when the opportunity arises they should be appointed at the average wage of those they represent. And to make that policy effective at the earliest possible moment members of the rank and file have only to cast their minds back to the General Strike, and recall who were the real workers then, and who the slackers, saboteurs, and cowards.

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THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS IN CANADA

By STEWART SMITH

THE Canadian general elections of September sound the death-knell of British Imperial domination in her first Dominion. In 1918 Canada became an equal signatory with Britain in the Versailles Treaty ; in 1921, supported by the United States, she pressed in the Washington Conference for Article X, giving the Dominion Parliaments the right to decide on external conflicts ; in 1922 she strongly resented Winston Churchill's call to arms after the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty ; in 1923 she concluded a Fisheries Treaty at Washington, without the signature of the British Ambassador ; a year ago she refused to sign the Locarno Pact, and sponsored Article IX :—

> The present Treaty shall impose no obligation upon any of the British Dominions or upon India, unless the government of such Dominions or of India signifies its acceptance thereof.

Canada concluded a Treaty with Belgium, her representatives replacing the British Ambassador ; she replied to a suggestion that Canada should contribute some millions yearly to the upkeep of a squadron in the British Fleet with an Act of Parliament making it impossible for governments, without the consent of Parliament, to conclude agreements involving military expenditure ; and decided to send a special permanent representative to Washington. And as if to cap all this, in 1926, with the odds of a smuggling exposure against him, Mackenzie King and his government are returned to office, with the Wall Street journal loudly acclaiming him the representative of American finance.

And this, after the whole tradition of " British Democracy " was violated to give his conservative, flag-waving imperialist opponent, Meighen, the inside of the election track. Lord Byng, the Governor-General, did what no English king has done for a hundred years. And in so doing definitely returned Canada to the position of a " colony." He refused King the dissolution of Parliament, gave the government to the conservatives, and then

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granted dissolution. Upon this the unripe nationalism of the Canadian bourgeoisie matured to full bloom. Its chief spokesman, Bourassa, declared :—

> Beware of to-morrow ! If you allow a Governor-General, a subaltern of the British government, to accord or refuse dissolution as he likes, and he decides which party shall be out and which party shall be in, you will wake up to find Downing Street will be the judge in Canada's political matters.

White House or Westminster ?

Bourassa merely gives voice to the antagonism between the interests of Downing Street and those of the Canadian bourgeoisie. Actually the political interests of the Canadian bourgeoisie lie much closer to White House than to Westminster. The rapid industrialisation of Canada during the war, America's catching up to and passing the mark of British capital, and the post-war depression, which brought a large part of Canadian industry under indirect American control, has made Canada economically, socially, and so far as foreign policy is concerned, no more than (as the U.S. Department of Commerce says) " the northern extension of the United States." Thus even as far back as the Chanak crisis, when Lloyd George was fomenting war with the " sick man of Europe," Canada categorically refused any responsibility for the implications of Britain's foreign policy. Likewise in the question of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, Canada's position was virtually that of White House. And still later, at Locarno, Canada saw clearly the possibility of implications with France, and refused to sign. In the eastern questions, this is even more the case. Bourassa asked in Parliament :—

> Have we the same interests in Irak and Mosul as the oil hunters of England have ?

And in accordance with the position that King has taken at the Imperial Conferences since 1923, an Act of Parliament was passed, that—

> before His Majesty's Canadian ministers advise ratification of a treaty, convention or agreement involving military or economic sanction, the approval of the Parliament of Canada shall be secured.

King's victory at the polls is a victory for White House and a defeat for Westminster.

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Downing Street and Wall Street

Canada, none the less, by the Grace of God and "imperial diplomacy," remains a part—in area one-third—of the British Empire. Half a million square miles larger than the United States; possessing 537·8 million acres of productive land against America's 293·8 million; 800 million acres of timber against America's 500 million; 3,635 million tons of iron ore on the island of Newfoundland alone, against America's total 4,200 million; one-sixth of the earth's coal reserve and 90 per cent. of the world's nickel; water power to supply the industrial demands of 100 million of population—in this Canada, England sees gigantic immigration possibilities and resultant upon this an enormous trade impetus. It is with this object in view that the Empire's foremost travelling salesman, the Prince of Wales, pays unending visits to Canada, followed by a line of lesser fry, all of whom return to entrance the unemployed masses of England with fairy-tales of Canada's prosperity. In regard to the new interest of British capital in Canada, noticeable particularly in the Midland Bank chairman becoming a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the *Morning Post* of August 11 states "that policy is necessarily related to the policy of inter-imperial migration." Already the flow of capital has commenced, and immigration to Canada, according to official reports, is 66 per cent. higher for the first six months of 1926 than for the corresponding period of 1925. Apart from Canada's grain, this is her primary importance for England.

On the other hand, for the United States the situation and attitude of Canada is of equal significance. One-fourth of her total foreign holdings are in Canada. She is already dependent upon Canadian timber resources for her pulp wood, and Canadian mines for some of the most important non-ferrous minerals. But of greatest importance is the fact stated by Nearing and Freeman in *Dollar Diplomacy*:—

> Within a few years the United States will cease to produce a sufficient supply of wheat and meat to feed its own population. The Canadian wheat fields will then become indispensable.

The continuation of America's prosperous home-expansion is going to depend to a large degree upon the breaking down of the

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trade boundary to the north. And already in June, 1925, the *Bulletin* of the National City Bank was urging freer trade with Canada, and bemoaning the high Fordney Tariff and Canada's duty on grain going to America. This is Canada's importance for America.

Political Interests in Canada

But the Canadian bourgeoisie itself is a much larger factor than either of these two, having in its possession a preponderating proportion of Canada's wealth. There will be no breaching of the gaps between the interests in Canada. By a brief examination of them the real significance of the election becomes plain.

Britain desires to exclude America from the Canadian market by a high tariff wall, at the same time maintaining her 33⅓ per cent. preference on the Canadian market; America seeks freer relations in trade with Canada, and would possibly be willing to offer free trade in natural products, allowing Canada to maintain intermediate tariffs on manufactured commodities. On the other hand, while the American factories in Canada (automobile, &c.) are thriving on preferential treatment within the Empire, the cotton, woollen and boot and shoe industries, &c., are in the most vigorous opposition to British preference, which is successfully competing with them.

Meighen is the representative primarily of the large railway interests and the British Empire Steel Corporation, but also of the smaller anti-British-preference Canadian capitalists. He would raise a high tariff wall against all imports. This would make possible the profitable transport of "Besco" coal to central Canada, and would be a severe blow to U.S. coal interests. He would cancel all Empire preference agreements, a blow to the American branch factories. And finally his avowed policy would be to maintain the grain duties, and possibly raise them to guarantee shipment through Canadian ports and a longer haulage for the Canadian Pacific. But even this stolid Orange imperialist changed his previous slogan of "Ready, aye, ready," and declared the decision of a Government to enter a foreign conflict "should be submitted to the judgment of the people at a general election before troops leave our shore." Even in Meighen Downing Street finds no true representative.

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But King is much more the representative of pure American interests than those of the Canadian bourgeoisie. Behind his slogan of American reciprocity he has united the Right Wing of the Farmers' Progressive Party, after splitting them away from the increasingly class-conscious Left. His autonomist attitude to British Imperialism has drawn to him the support of the French masses of Canada. And his pose on old-age pensions, and the sedition clauses of the criminal code enacted at the time of the Winnipeg Strike, has been a fairly successful bid for the support of the workers. He stands at the same time for reciprocity with America and a policy of Imperial Preference—the former in response to a natural economic development, the latter to secure orders for American " Made in Canada " goods.

" *Imperial Influence* " *in Canada*

King has over-stepped the colonial bounds a hundred times. In his resolution on military agreements he has created a dangerous precedent for all the Dominions, and at the same time has created the basis for a more decisive position at the forthcoming Imperial Conference. In 1926, rather than being defeated with odds against him, he is returned with a larger majority in Parliament than he received at the last election. How will " Imperial influence " deal with King ?

This leads to the fundamental question: Can England check the separatist tendencies of her Dominions across the seas ? Can " the far-flung Empire " be held under her political domination ? Australia demands the withdrawal of the British governors. South Africa would fly a flag of her own. In Canada the bourgeoisie demands the abolition of British Preference, the farmers demand reciprocity with America, the French masses declare for independence, the Labour Party calls for complete self-determination, and the Communist Party, the real party of the masses, leads the fight for complete separation and a Workers' and Farmers' Government. America's " peaceful penetration " threatens to develop implications of a different character. The interests of the mature bourgeoisie of the Dominions are incompatible with British foreign policy. The manifest destiny of the Dominions is separation from the Empire.

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The World of Labour

TRADE UNIONISM IN THE BALKANS

THE Trade Union Movements of the Balkan countries are on the whole of similar nature, and have pursued in recent years roughly parallel courses of development. Before, during, and shortly after the war, the trade unions were predominantly of a revolutionary complexion. Jointly with the majorities of the Socialist Parties they opposed the war, and suffered the consequence, only to gain greatly in membership and strength immediately after the war, and to become important mass organisations. Social instability in the years 1920 and onward reached such a degree in all the Balkan countries that the power of the ruling classes could only be maintained by resort to the most extreme forms of terror, directed at first against the political parties, and later against the unions. In consequence the latter in many cases nearly or completely disappeared. Until 1923 the economic crisis was not very severe, but wage reductions and worsening of working conditions went on.

During this period, the beginnings or increase in influence of the free or social-democratic trade unions took place. They secured the monopoly of legal existence, and in some cases were able to occupy the headquarters from which the revolutionary unions had been expelled, and were thus able to obtain a foothold.

In addition to the two chief types of organisation, several others exist, of which the "autonomous" (syndicalist) unions are the most important. Their chief weakness is their isolation, which in the past has been jealously maintained, but has been fatal to their effectiveness. They are usually willing to enter into negotiations for unification with the reformist and revolutionary organisations.

In 1923 and 1924, the economic situation in the Balkans became rapidly worse, unemployment increased, and hours of work were extended. In spite of the white terror, which during the last two years has committed unheard-of excesses, the revolutionary trade unions began to revive, and with them a strong movement in favour of trade union unity. The pressure of the membership in both the "Amsterdam" and "Independent" unions has been such that several unity conferences, joint demonstrations, &c., have been held, but hitherto without organisational results. The difficulty of unification in the Balkans is naturally very great, since the reformist trade unions are closely bound up with the Social-Democratic parties, which in their turn have had, and continue to maintain, close contact with the white-terrorist Governments.

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The I.F.T.U. Balkan Conference

In response to the movement for unity, a conference of Balkan trade union organisations was called by the I.F.T.U. for April 9 and 10 in Sofia, from which much was expected. It was found, however, that only organisations affiliated to the I.F.T.U. were allowed representation. The Bulgarian Independents, collectively and severally, applied for admission, but were refused. Ultimately the Jugo-Slavian Independents were even denied admission as guests.

Large numbers of workers greeted the visitors on their arrival at Sofia, without interference from the authorities, although conflicts took place between members of the rival unions, and the speech of greeting of the Independent representative was not allowed translation. Later, open meetings were held in several towns in Bulgaria, an event without precedent in recent years, and addressed by I.F.T.U. representatives.

The conference was attended by ten delegates from Bulgaria, eleven from Jugo-Slavia, three from Rumania, and two from Greece. In addition the I.F.T.U. was represented by two delegates, the International Trade Secretariat by four, and the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian unions by three delegates. The chair was taken by C. Mertens; Danoff, the Bulgarian secretary, gave an indication of the purpose of the conference in his opening address, in which, according to the I.F.T.U. report, he

> pointed to the significant fact that the Congress was attended by delegates from countries which not so long ago had been at war, and now met together to discuss their common interests under the leadership of the I.F.T.U. He expressed the hope that the Congress would strengthen the bonds between the Balkan trade unions, and that his Balkan comrades would have the opportunity of profiting by the experience of the trade unionists in neighbouring countries and those from Western Europe.

Sassenbach, however, replied that the purpose of the conference was not to interfere in the political relations of the Balkan countries. The tasks of the conference were, on the contrary—

> (1) To formulate general principles for the conduct of the trade union struggle in the Balkan countries, and to recommend these principles to the National Trade Union Centres for them to carry out.
>
> (2) To impress upon the governments and the ruling classes the justice of the trade union struggle, and to urge them not to obstruct the trade unions by legal, police, and economic measures, since it can be shown that while in the past all countries have been guilty of this conduct all the civilised states now recognise not only the justice but also the need for trade unionism.
>
> (3) United action by the workers of the Balkan countries for the promotion of protective social legislation; united action being made possible by the fact that the stages of development reached in the four countries do not differ very greatly.
>
> (4) To provide our Bulgarian comrades, and comrades in the other Balkan countries, with proof of the international solidarity of Labour.

Committees were appointed to discuss :—

> (1) The right of combination and free speech. (2) The basic principles of Trade Union activity. (3) Social legislation.

The report of committee (2) stated that representatives of the Bulgarian and Rumanian Independents were interviewed; both expressed themselves

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in favour of unity, and were willing to make concessions in order to facilitate this. A resolution on unity was passed unanimously, which read :—

> This Balkan Trade Union Conference urges all trade unions of the Balkan countries where unity has not yet been established but which accept the guiding principles of the Conference, and accept the policy and methods of the I.F.T.U., to enter into negotiations at the earliest possible moment under the auspices of the I.F.T.U. with the object of achieving unity. The negotiations shall be conducted separately in each country, and shall have as their object the formation of a single National Trade Union Centre.

The Jugo-Slavian delegation added a declaration:—

> On the question of trade union unity in the Balkan countries the delegation from the Yugo-Slav Federation of Trade Unions affirms that :—
>
> (1) In Yugo-Slavia the unification of the *bona-fide* trade unions has already been accomplished.
>
> (2) Only certain trade union groups which are not autonomous have remained outside this unification.
>
> (3) The experience we have gained in achieving trade union unity proves that the general unification of the separate sections into which the workers have been divided will become possible only after the complete eradication of the theory and practice of syndicalism and bolshevism.

Since this conference there has been some effort towards unification, principally in Bulgaria, but the results have, up to the present, been small. It is clear that the principal effect of the conference, so far as the Trade Union Movement is concerned, is that the " Amsterdam " bodies are now established, in the eyes of the Governments at any rate, as the national trade union centre, perhaps in return for the declaration, in the resolution on Basic Principles of Trade Union Activity, that

> Strikes should in general be undertaken only for economic objects and only after most careful consideration.
>
> Efforts to establish a more equitable social order are primarily the task of the political parties.

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World Migration and Progress. (I.F.T.U., 15s.)

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The Bridge to Liberty. A plan to evolve from the capitalist system to the Co-operative system. (Henry Roche Printing Company, 25 cents.)

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The Islanders. By Archibald Hurd. (Cassell & Co., Ltd., 3s. 6d.)

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ERRATUM

Page 595, October Number.—S. W. Chandler represented the R.C.A., not the A.S.L.E. & F., at the Bournemouth Congress.

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